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THE NEW YORKER

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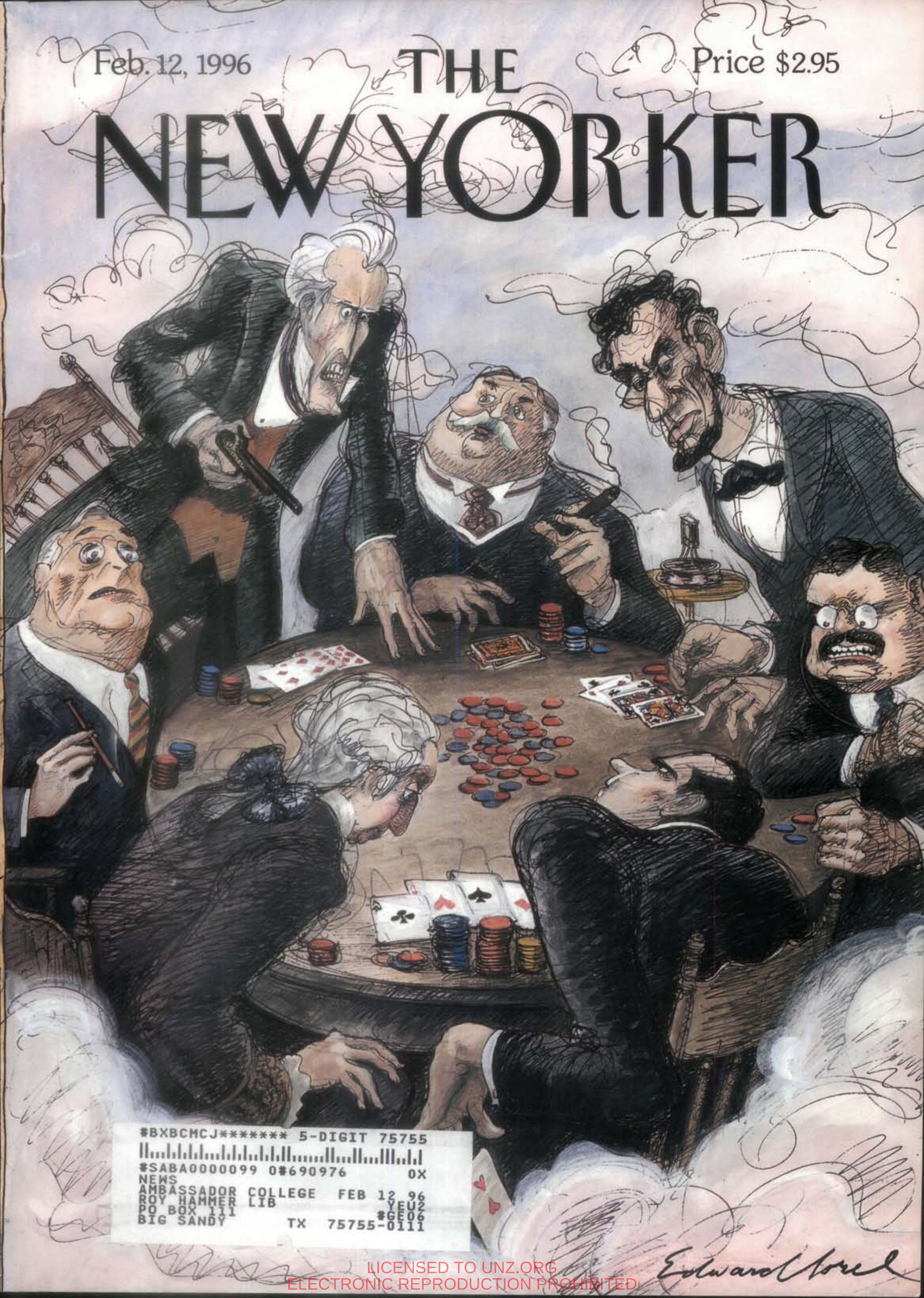

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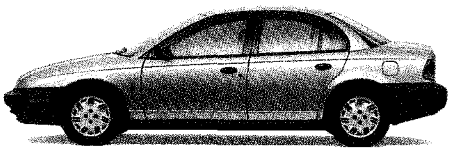

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THE NEW YORKER

FEBRUARY 12, 1996

COMMENT Alien Ambition . . . . *Timothy Ferris* 4
The oldest question on earth still awaits an answer.

IN THE MAIL 6

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN 8

THE TALK OF THE TOWN 25
A reporter repents; a Prague victory; valentines from Harry Winston; off-the-hook messages; etc.

DEPARTMENTS

Annals of Communications That's Entertainment . . . . *Ken Auletta* 29
Headless executives become the latest show-business fashion.

The Political Scene Don't Ever Change . . . . *Sidney Blumenthal* 34
Bob Dole returns to a favorite pastime—having a terrible time on the campaign trail.

LIFE AND LETTERS Perfect Pitch . . . . *David Remnick* 38
Once Russia ceased to be a country for Joseph Brodsky, it became words. Photograph by Richard Avedon.

ARTIST AT LARGE La Fenice . . . . *Tullio Pericoli* 44

LETTER FROM TUZLA Salt City . . . . *William Finnegan* 46
Many people survived the hell of Bosnia. And they all have stories they need to tell.

OUR LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS My Habit . . . . *Paul Sheehan* 58
Is there anything a compulsive won't collect—including crack vials?

FICTION "Faith" . . . . *Tim O'Brien* 62
Who is that looking through the window? Who is that scrutinizing the bedclothes?

THE CRITICS

A Critic at Large Lana Turner . . . . *John Updike* 68
Books Rem Koolhaas's "S, M, L, XL" . . . . *Brendan Gill* 76
Philip Kitcher's "The Lives to Come" . . . . *John Seabrook* 79
Briefly Noted 82
The Current Cinema "The Juror," "A Midwinter's Tale" . . . . *James Wolcott* 83
Musical Events "Four Saints in Three Acts" . . . . *Paul Griffiths* 86

POEMS

"Portrait of Tragedy" . . . . *Joseph Brodsky* 40
"Passing" . . . . *W. S. Merwin* 60

SHOUTS & MURMURS Killer Bagels . . . . *Calvin Trillin* 88

COVER *Presidential Privilege, by Edward Sorel*

DRAWINGS *Jack Ziegler, Leo Cullum, Michael Maslin, J. P. Rini, Charles Barsotti, J. B. Handelsman, Tom Cheney, Bob Knox, Mick Stevens, Danny Shanahan, Warren Miller, Edward Koren, Frank Cotham, Sam Gross, Mike Twohy*

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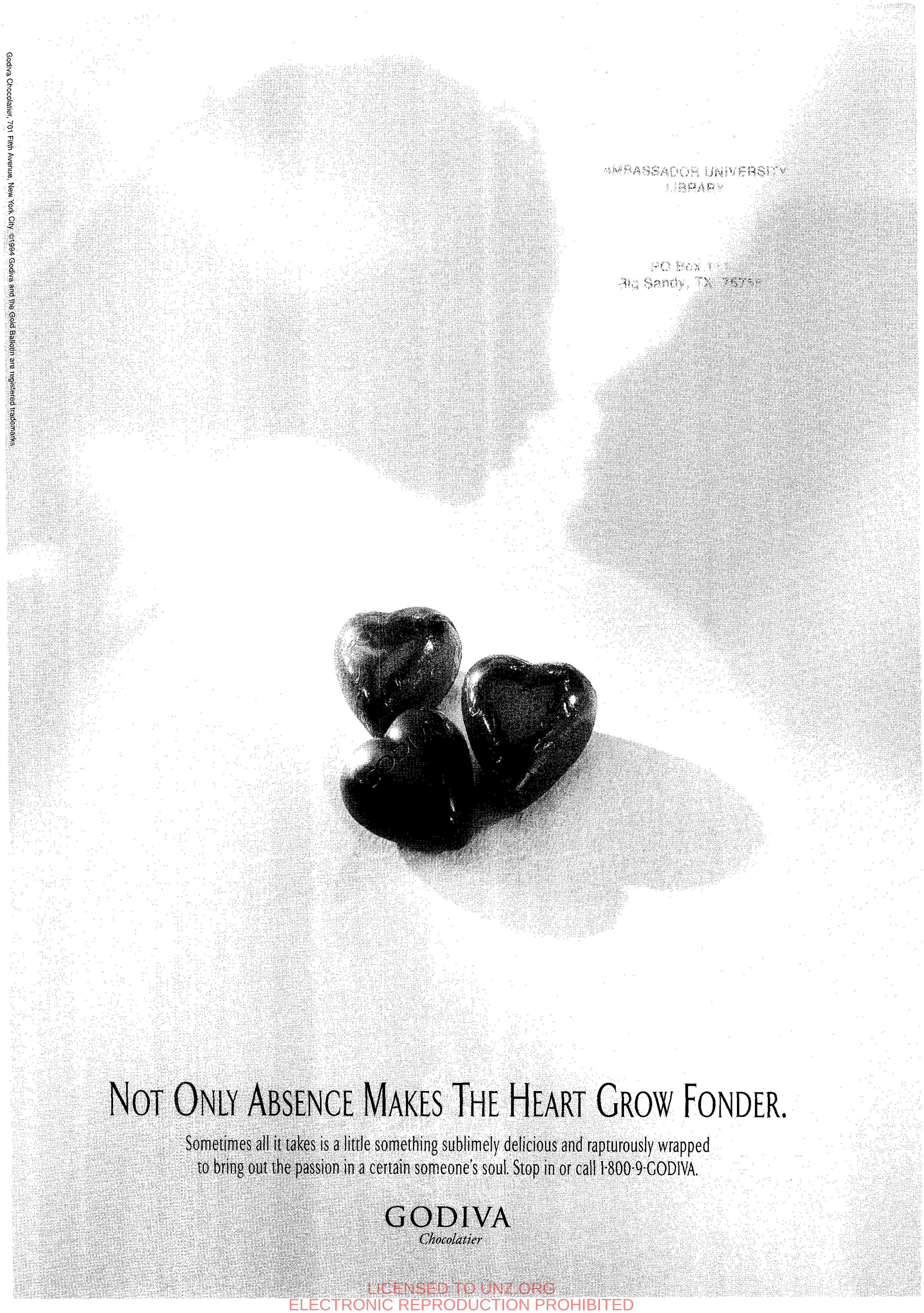

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COMMENT

ALIEN AMBITION

If there's life on other planets, do we want to find it?

THE recent discovery of two planets beyond the solar system which may have the climates and oceans suitable for life excites the imagination. But whether these planets actually have life is a question that will prove extremely difficult to answer. No telescope has yet been able to take a picture of a planet orbiting another star, much less obtain a spectrum that might analyze its light for signs of biological activity. Nor is there any evidence of extraterrestrial life in the solar system—although fossils, or even hibernating life-forms, might conceivably turn up on the once balmier but now long-frozen tundra of Mars, or beneath the clouds of Saturn's moon Titan, or in oceans under the fractured ice that sheathes Jupiter's moon Europa.

Yet, while it is not possible actually to see signs of life on other worlds, there has long been another way to search for them—by listening for signals that might be transmitted by technologically advanced civilizations on planets circling any of the billions of stars on our side of the Milky Way galaxy. This endeavor is called the Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence, or SETI. "Intelligence" is here defined pragmatically, as referring to beings who transmit electromagnetic signals that are strong enough to be detected after travelling through the vast distances that separate the stars. By this definition, human beings are intelligent. We do not intentionally transmit interstellar messages, but lots of signals intended for domestic consumption—episodes of "The Honeymooners," pulses emitted by giant radar warning systems during the Cold War, World Cup soccer matches—have leaked into space, where they form a ragged sphere, now nearly a hundred light-years in radius, which continues to expand at the velocity of light.

An alien equipped with an unremarkable radio telescope could send an interstellar message using no more power than is broadcast by the FM station on an average college campus, so one might imagine that terrestrial radio astronomers would be constantly searching the skies for signals. Oddly, that is not the case. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the cancellation by Congress, in 1993, of a SETI program that had been inaugurated by NASA a year earlier, there is no government-funded SETI project left anywhere on Earth. What's left is small science—three significant SETI programs, all pri-

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vately supported, all run by scientists and engineers who have become accustomed to struggling with shoestring budgets while enduring the scorn of many of their colleagues.

The modest scale of modern SETI was conspicuously in evidence at Harvard's Agassiz Station observatory on a cold, sunny day last October when they threw the switch that started the Billion-Channel Extra-Terrestrial Assay, or BETA. The dish antenna, a modest eighty-four feet in diameter and tilted atop a conical stand, looked as simple as a cartoon in a pulp sci-fi magazine from the nineteen-thirties. BETA runs on only about forty thousand dollars a year. A quarter-million connections in the circuit boards were soldered by hand, mostly by students.

All SETI projects are stabs in the dark. There are a hundred billion stars in our galaxy, so even if thousands of worlds were transmitting signals it could take decades before observers hit on even one right star. To improve the odds, most observers concentrate on stars that resemble the sun, guess at a "magic," radio-quiet zone where extraterrestrials might be transmitting, and blanket the radio spectrum around it by using multi-channel receivers and computers to analyze millions of frequencies at once.

Any search strategy can be criticized, and all have been. The biologist Ernst Mayr, of Harvard, noting that life on Earth lingered long at the unicellular level and that only one among the approximately one billion species of life that evolved here produced intelligence, concludes that intelligence is unlikely to have cropped up elsewhere in the galaxy. The physicist Paul Horowitz, also of Harvard, replies that Earth is the one biological experiment we know about, and it produced intelligent life, so one might as readily conclude that the odds of success are a hundred per cent.

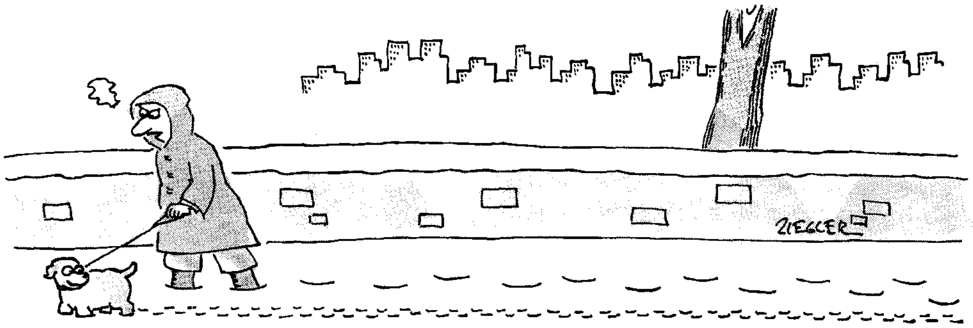
Another argument holds that advanced aliens, if they existed, would have colonized Earth by now. If alien civilizations could afford to broadcast, "they would find interstellar travel affordable," the astronomer Robert Rood says. "They should be here, and they're not here." The catechistic response is that interstellar travel is by any measure preposterously expensive compared with radio transmitting, and that no compelling motive has been identified which would impel spacefaring societies to pay such enormous tariffs to visit one small planet situated in the suburbs of the galaxy.

Despite all the skepticism and their somewhat reduced and freebooting circumstances, the SETI scientists have never sounded more optimistic. Horowitz thinks that a signal will be relatively easy to detect, provided that the extraterrestrials have fashioned it with easy detection in mind. "If they do their job well, the signal will be unmistakable, because it's part of doing the job well," he says. "Trust them." Frank Drake, the astronomer who, in 1960, conducted the first SETI project and today ranks as the searchers' elder statesman, flatly predicts contact by the year 2000. Intelligent extraterrestrials are "out there to be found," he told the crowd at the BETA dedication. "I think we can guarantee you that." Hopes of making contact run high enough so that the SETI community has renewed debate over the once taboo issue of whether we should be intentionally transmitting signals, and not just listening. "Isn't that fair play?" Drake asks. "This is a big subject at the SETI Institute these days." Others react to such talk with horror. Rood warns that "the civilization that blurts out its existence on interstellar beacons at the first opportunity may be like some early hominoid descending from the trees and calling 'Here, kitty!' to a sabre-toothed tiger."

There's something slightly wild about SETI anyway. Its zaniness is part of its appeal, and reminds us that some of the most practical human achievements were conceived with the least practical of motives. One of them was radio itself: the impetus that brought us from Guglielmo Marconi's wireless experiments in the eighteen-nineties to global satellite-TV coverage of the Super Bowl had begun two decades earlier, with James Clerk Maxwell's bemused pure research into electromagnetic fields.

The physicist Philip Morrison, who helped think up SETI, defends it against the canard that it is a "data-free science" by suggesting that it is not so much science as exploration. That's not a demotion: our species was reared on exploration. But by now the dry lands of our planet have been explored, and this world is closing in on us. The future—too many people crowding and despoiling a known planet—looks increasingly claustrophobic.

Kafka said, famously, that "a book must be the axe for the frozen sea inside us." Dostoyevski put the axe in orbit: "What would become of an axe in space?" Ivan is asked, in "The Brothers Karamazov," by the satanic "fallen angel" he has hallucinated. "*Quelle idée!* If it were to fall to any distance, it would begin, I think, flying round the earth without knowing why, like a satellite." SETI, too, is an axe of sorts. It could shatter the frozen sea of our bounded world, widening our universe to incorporate not just new landscapes but new ways of perceiving them, and ourselves. The motto of SETI could be the words that Marconi uttered, recalling his frustration in the autumn of 1894, when his initial experiments in radio transmission had all failed. "*Ma non mi persi di coraggio,*" he said. "But I did not lose my courage." —TIMOTHY FERRIS



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QUESTIONING A NEO-NAZI

Ingo Hasselbach's Personal History "How Nazis Are Made" (written with Tom Reiss, January 8th) makes its point with blazing simplicity: ignorance is surely the most essential raw material for the manufacture and perpetuation of hatred. Let us all work to insure that in the new century it becomes the rarest of commodities.

NELL W. STIFEL
Philadelphia, Pa.

Mr. Hasselbach would like readers to believe that a moral awakening made him abandon his position as a neo-Nazi leader, but it should be noted that his transformation coincided with widespread public expressions of hostility to the neo-Nazi cause. In view of Hasselbach's confession that "I only began fights I knew I could win," it seems far more likely that cowardice was the source of this bully's change of heart.

D. SMITH
New Rochelle, N.Y.

In 1959, when I was a Fulbright researcher in Paris, my wife and I were invited to Germany to represent the United States at an international conference on prejudice. Although most of the middle-aged and older Germans in attendance expressed abhorrence at their recent history, many of the students there openly chafed at the burden of guilt that they believed their elders were forcing on them. For me, the most chilling image in Hasselbach's article is that of the cake-eating eighty-year-old woman inciting the neo-Nazis to desecrate more Jewish cemeteries. How inapt the slogan "We're back!" is. Actually, they never left.

A. BALL
Temecula, Calif.

TOO MANY COOKS?

Anthony Lane, in his review of cookbooks, "Look Back in Hunger" (December 18th), opines that "365 Ways to Cook Hamburger and Other Ground Meats" is "the most disgusting book on earth." As the book's author, I don't feel that I should reject this inglorious position in history without first observing that more than fifty thousand people own the book, and that they, along with most other real American cooks, would find Lane's choice of cooking experiments (braised rump of veal and sardine-and-potato terrine indeed!) much more "disgusting" than he finds my Ed Debevic's Burnt Meatloaf. If Lane used my recipes and didn't like them, I would have to take the criticism, but, considering the source, I say it's spinach, and I say the hell with it.

RICK RODGERS
Jersey City, N.J.

Mr. Lane's piece on cookbooks was a delight and a vindication. Ordinary mortals shouldn't cross saucepans with culinary gods like Escoffier and Julia Child. I know; I tried. My personal Armageddon occurred when I committed myself to building a beef Wellington à la Julia Child. She assures the reader that "if you have prepared all the various elements a day ahead of time the assembling and cooking are easy." In fact, there are seven elaborate steps involved, and Step 5 has four parts. Furthermore, several of the steps are incredibly time-consuming. This is not a recipe but a regimen for living.

ARLINE BATEMAN
Tucson, Ariz.

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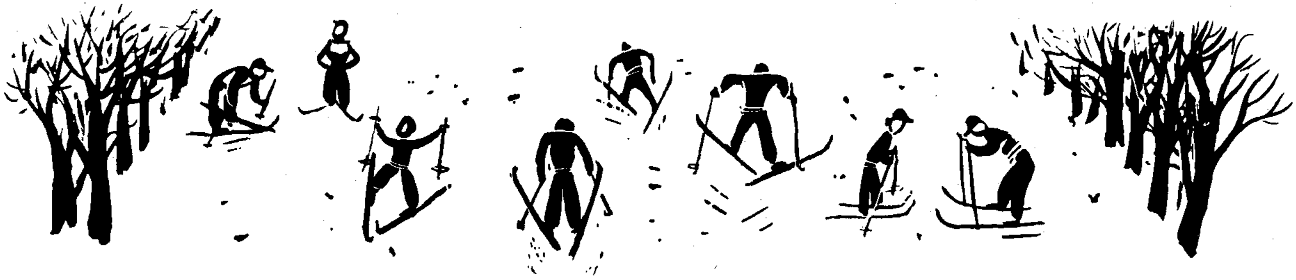

THE THEATRE

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OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

The Amazing Metrano: An Accidental Comedy—Art Metrano, who recovered the ability to walk after breaking three vertebrae in his neck, gives an account of his rehabilitation in this one-man comedy. In previews. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 505-0700.)

The Architect and the Emperor of Assyria—The Spanish playwright Fernando Arrabal's 1967 comedy, about two men who develop an array of role-playing relationships—mother-child, torturer-victim, master-slave—while stranded on an island. Presented by the Independent Theatre Company. Opens Feb. 7 at 8. (House of Candles Theatre, 99 Stanton St. 353-3088.)

Bus Stop—Mary-Louise Parker, Ron Perlman, and Billy Crudup lead the cast in a revival of William Inge's 1955 comedy. Directed by Josephine R. Abady. In previews. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

A Fair Country—Laurence Luckinbill plays an American diplomat whose family (Judith Ivey, Dan Futterman, and Matt McGrath) disintegrates after he tries to put an end to their long assignment in South Africa, in a new play by Jon Robin Baitz. In previews. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Rent—Puccini's "La Bohème" was the inspiration for the late Jonathan Larson's new musical, about a group of young East Villagers. In previews through Feb. 11. Opens Feb. 13 at 8. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 460-5475.)

The Winter's Tale—The Pearl Theatre Company offers Shakespeare's tragicomedy. In previews through Feb. 10. Opens Feb. 11 at 2. (80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802.)

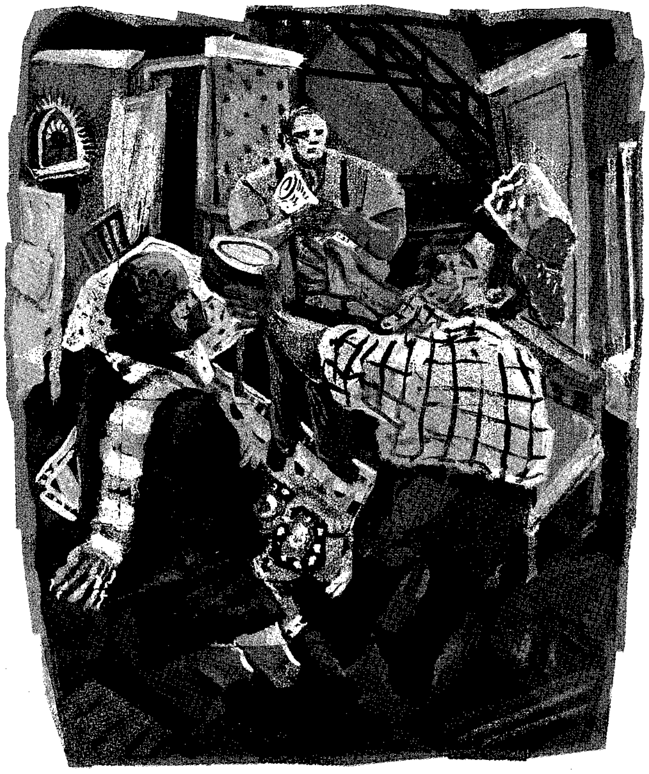
OPENED RECENTLY

Bed and Sofa—A new musical based on the Soviet director Abram Room's 1926 silent film, about a working-class couple and a laborer who are thrown together during the Moscow housing shortage. Music by Polly Pen. Libretto by Laurence Klavan. Andre Ernotte directed. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874. Closes Feb. 18.)

Blue Window—Craig Lucas's 1984 play centers on a party given by a nervous hostess and attended by six other young New Yorkers. Directed by Joe Mantello. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Dick Gregory Live—The master returns in a hilarious two-hour riff, skewering our fondest end-of-millennium hypocrisies and delusions with an astringent yet avuncular air. His bite, although it has mellowed with time, is still sharp as he ruminates on everything from Bosnia to O.J. to airplane travel. (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 239-6200. Closes Feb. 18.)

The Father—As the benighted protagonist of Strindberg's 1887 drama, Frank Langella is a revelation—in the nearly two decades since "Dracula," he's gone from feline to leonine, and when he topples into madness you feel an unexpected primal sympathy for him. Aided by Richard Nelson's straightforward new adaptation, which reinforces Strindberg's blunt vision, Langella explores every forbidding corner of the play's brutal psychosexual universe. Gail Strickland, who plays Langella's wife (and enemy), is irritatingly difficult to understand—get out your ear trumpet. Angela Bettis, as the unhappy couple's daughter, brings just the right amount of creepy coyness to her part. Directed by Clifford Williams. (Reviewed in our issue of 1/29/96.) (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400. Closes Feb. 25.)



Terri Klausner, Jason Workman, and Michael X. Martin, in "Bed and Sofa."

RUSSELL CHRISTIAN

The Food Chain—The situations in Nicky Silver's new play are familiar and sitcom-ish, but the writing is tangy and memorably funny, and the actors—especially Phyllis Newman, as a long-suffering Jewish matron whose idea of listening is to talk—give smart, wonderfully fresh performances. Robert Falls directed. (9/11/95) (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

Frank Pig Says Hello—A nightmarish mood pervades Patrick McCabe's tale of a young boy's descent into madness, but it's tempered by a manic humor that makes the awful bearable. (The play opens on a monstrous orange moon suspended in darkness, accompanied by a melancholy trumpet and offstage snorts.) Portraying not only the adult Frank, who narrates, but also every other friend, relative, and townsman and -woman that his younger self, Piglet, encounters, Sean Rock gives an amazing performance; David Gorry is compelling as Piglet, a sad, tic-laden, clownlike figure whose belief that he is a pig is merely one symptom of a mind spinning out of control. The pace can be exhausting and the story confusing (it's not clear whether some scenes are real or imagined, and who the hell is Alo?), but the production, directed by Joe O'Byrne, is excellent and inventive, and the performances are something to see. Adapted by Mr. McCabe from his novel "The Butcher Boy." (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22 St. 727-2737. Closes Feb. 18.)

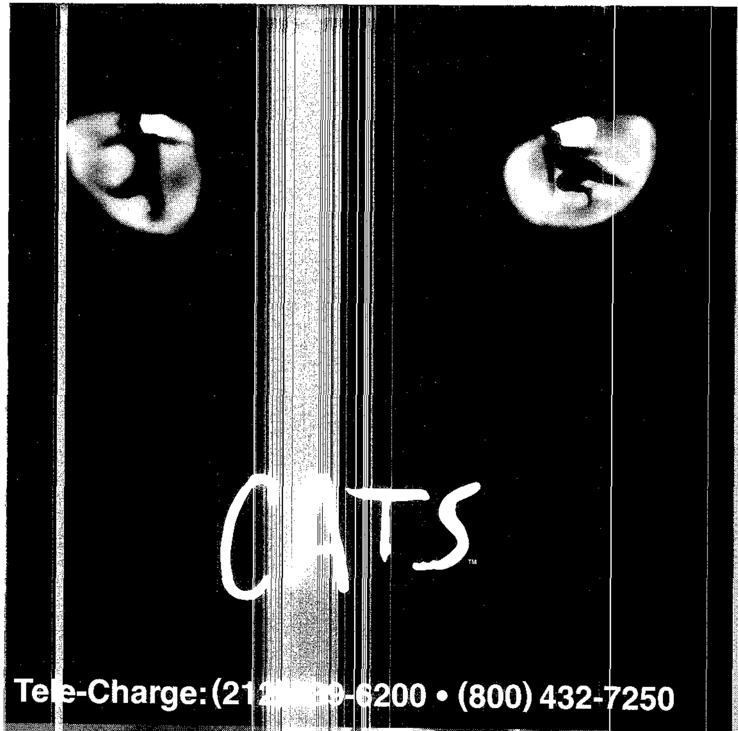
The Grey Zone—Tim Blake Nelson's disjointed but shockingly powerful story of the *Sonderkommandos*—Jews who worked in the gas chambers and crematoriums of the death camps—in a nearly flawless production. Among the finest components are Douglas Hughes's assured direction, David Van Tieghem's eerie, evocative sound design, and Gus Rogerson's blistering performance as one of the organizers of a rebellion. (MCC, 120 W. 28th St. 727-7765. Closes Feb. 10.)

The Hairy Ape—A limited-run production of Eugene O'Neill's 1921 drama, presented by the Wooster Group. (Performing Garage, 33 Wooster St. 966-3651. Closes Feb. 18.)

Jam On the Groove—Ten loose-limbed numbers—including a slapstick shadow dance, a martial-arts fantasia, and a dance-noir detective story—show off the impressive range of hip-hop choreography, and the house rocks with a sort of call-and-response encouragement from the audience. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.)

Jean Cocteau Repertory—Presenting "Major Barbara," George Bernard Shaw's 1905 play, in rotating repertory with Ibsen's 1888 drama, "The Lady from the Sea." (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

King Lear—The New York Shakespeare Festival's clear and beautiful production carries the tale aloft on naturalistic wings, with sets, costumes, lighting, and sound that are exquisitely evocative in spite of their simplicity. The ensemble is strong, with Jared Harris giving a boastful, sad performance as the evil Edmund and Rob Campbell a tender one as his patient and virtuous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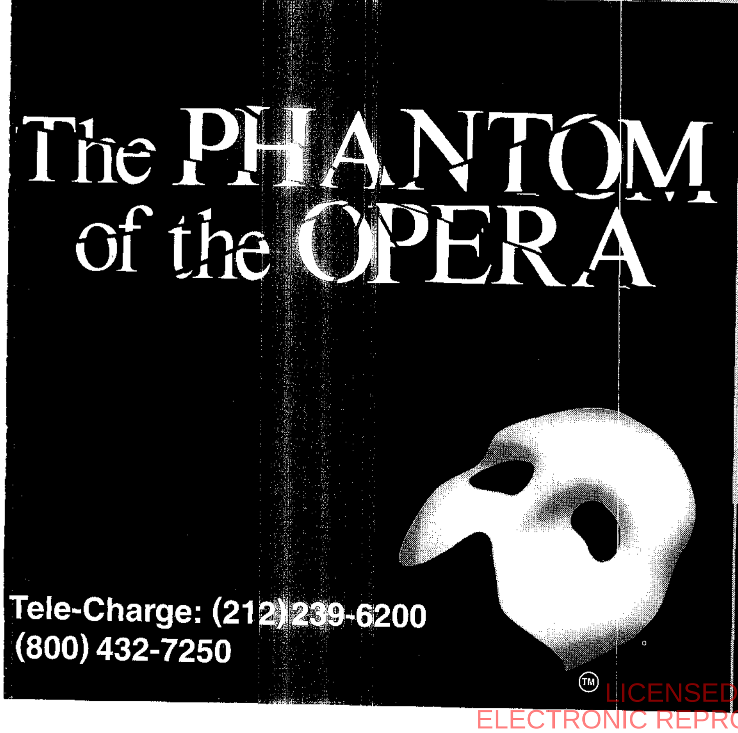
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brother, Edgar. Jeffrey Wright is an affecting Fool, and Thomas Hill seems to embody oblivious innocence in the role of Gloucester. What's missing is a monarch of stature: although F. Murray Abraham is touching once Lear has been humbled, early on he lacks the voice, the power, and the posture to project the blinding ego that betrays the king, and so his fall seems a short one. Directed by Adrian Hall. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400. Closes Feb. 18.)

Master Class—In Terrence McNally's latest play, Zoe Caldwell portrays Maria Callas with steely, divaesque conviction, but the role is merely the sum of all the clichés that have been in circulation for years; the Callas who was a consummate professional and an inspired teacher—and a human being—is missing. Leonard Foglia directed. (11/27/95) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Measure for Measure—In one of Shakespeare's odder plays, a duke who worries that he has been too lax in enforcing his subjects' morals appoints the most righteous man in the realm regent and disguises himself as a monk. The regent, however, is not what he seems, and the duke must put things right. The issues are whether moral questions can be decided by law and whether laws are made by honest men; and, with an unwed mother, an irresponsible father, and a betrayed fiancée (just for a start), the drama plays like an up-to-the-minute commentary on our own public controversies over religion and the family—though even in 1604 the answers weren't clear-cut. Barry Kyle's stark, stunning production (with a set design by Christine Jones and costumes by Constance Hoffman) creates the appropriate setting for the overflowing emotions. Presented by Theatre for a New Audience. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200. Closes Feb. 17.)

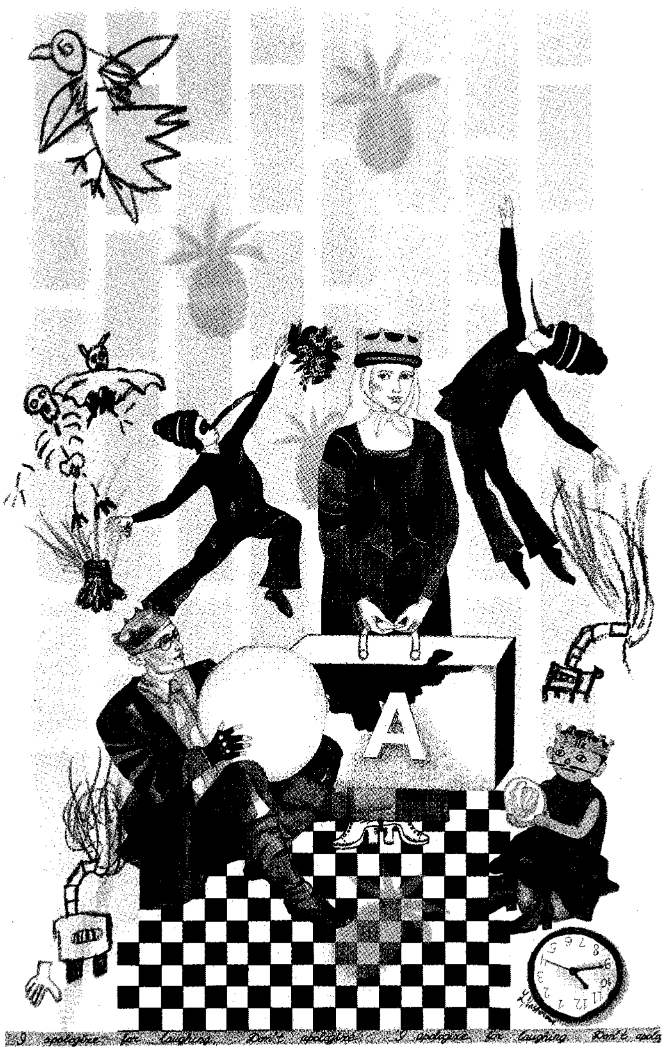
Mrs. Klein—Two London psychoanalysts—the famous Melanie Klein (Uta Hagen) and her less renowned daughter, Melitta (Laila Robins)—face off in a murderous argument and proceed to browbeat each other with theory. Nicholas Wright's smart though schematic drama dissects Klein's tempestuous relationship with her high-strung daughter and shrewdly explores the autobiographical parallels to Klein's seminal thesis on the effects of parental neglect. Robins is excellent; Hagen is brilliant. (11/20/95) (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

Molly Sweeney—Brian Friel's 1994 play owes much to Oliver Sacks's case study "To See and Not See," about a virtually blind man who underwent two operations that temporarily restored his sight but permanently disrupted his way of knowing the world. Friel moved the setting from America to Ireland and made the main character a woman, but he didn't reimagine the material, and the play, which Friel directed, comes across as a staged reading of an essay. The three actors—Catherine Byrne, as Molly, Jason Robards, as the doctor who hopes to make her see again, and Alfred Molina, as Molly's foolish, blustery husband—sit in chairs or stand and address the audience, and they all end up overexplaining themselves. Molina, making his New York stage début, gives the play momentum with a terrific performance, but you'll find more drama in Sacks's piece than in this play. (1/29/96) (Laura Pels, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

Moon Over Buffalo—Ken Ludwig's backstage farce is as forgettable as Carol Burnett is not: our reigning red-headed queen of comedy is delightful to behold. Tom Moore directed. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Picasso at the Lapin Agile—Steve Martin's comedy, set in a Paris bar in 1904, is not so much a play of ideas as a play of notions, about art, science, the twentieth century (oh, *that* old thing); it features Einstein and Picasso, sittin' around talkin' about how they're going to change the world, and contains a satisfying amount of Martin's coolly absurdist humor—but there's a certain sourness to the proceedings which may put you off. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

The Preservation Society—A Southern family gets a shakeup in Wm. S. Leavengood's new comedy, in which a daughter's impending lesbian wedding puts other relationships to the test. With the exception of a bigoted brother, the men are likable galoots who can't help being what they are. But even though Leavengood makes the female characters more complex, it's hard to believe they deserve as much immunity from blame as they get. In the absence of new insights into the family, the real message here is in the mess—the one that many people (hetero- and homosexual) make of their relationships. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052. Closes Feb. 11.)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I apologize for laughing. Don't apologize. I apologize for laughing. Don't apolo

James Urbaniak and Mary McBride, in "The Universe."

LIDIA NESTEROVA

Sheba—The Queen of the fabled nation of Sheba, a country where women are the dominant sex, visits Israel and falls in love with King Solomon, in a musical that, with a nod to "Kismet," relies heavily on baubles, bangles, and beads. The production numbers are tightly directed, and the actors are beautiful (especially Tamara Tunie, who plays the Queen) and talented. But in the end a musical is about music, and though the tunes are pleasant enough they don't resonate beyond the theatre doors. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000. Closes Feb. 18.)

The Universe—In Richard Foreman's latest mind-wrenching vaudeville, three cheerfully desperate oddballs (James Urbaniak, Tony Torn, and Mary McBride) attempt to discover universal truths, behave normally, and find love in a thoroughly unknowable, abnormal, and inhospitable world. As usual, Foreman encumbers his actors with a funhouse set and delightfully unwieldy props. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 533-4650.)

Victor/Victoria—Julie Andrews, Tony Roberts, and Michael Nouri star in a theatrical version of the 1982 movie. The score (by Henry Mancini) is generic, and the book (by Blake Edwards, who also directed) is patchwork. The leggy Rachel York, as a blond bimbo, at least enjoys herself—and the audience enjoys her, too. (11/20/95) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

Virgins and Other Myths—Colin Martin's one-man show—a sort of "This Gay Boy's Life"—is an explicit though graceful dive into the depths of his own psyche. He shuttles between a chronological narrative and psychological milestones in his life, now and then stopping to wonder just when it was, exactly, that he lost his virginity. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052. Closes Feb. 25.)

WordFire Festival—The Watermark Theatre's annual solo-performance shindig. Feb. 8, Feb. 10, and Feb. 12 at 7:30 and Feb. 11 at 3 and 7:30: Susan Miller in "My Left Breast," which deals with her mastectomy. Through Feb. 18. . . . ¶ Feb. 7 and Feb. 9 at 7:30 and Feb. 10 at 9:30: Dael Orlandersmith in "Characters in Motion," a piece about the lives of city dwellers. Through Feb. 17. (66 Wooster St. 966-9290.)

Working Class—Almost every one of the eight laborers that Richard Hoehler portrays in his one-man show is disenchanted: a janitor at an A.A. meeting sees his life as a failure, a caterer admits that he is lousy at his profession, a construction worker could care less about a promotion. Hoehler aims to put humble yet heroic faces on the nation's workers, but he barely penetrates the experience of his subjects, leaving their personalities as sketchy as the category of "working class" itself. (Mint, 311 W. 43rd St. 315-9434. Closes Feb. 18.)

LONG RUNS

AFTER-PLAY: Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200. . . . **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **DEATH DEFYING ACTS:** Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200. (Closes Feb. 25.). . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **GRANDMA SYLVIA'S FUNERAL:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555. . . . **GREASE!:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **HOW TO SUCCEED IN BUSINESS WITHOUT REALLY TRYING:** Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PARTY:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM**

OF THE OPERA: Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **ROB BECKER'S DEFENDING THE CAVEMAN:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100. . . . **SHOW BOAT:** Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **SUNSET BOULEVARD:** Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4007. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200.

DANCE

New York City Ballet—Feb. 7 at 8: "Divertimento No. 15," "The Waltz Project," and "Ancient Airs and Dances." . . . ¶ Feb. 8 at 8: "Swan Lake," "Huoah," "Allegro Brillante," and "Stars and Stripes." . . . ¶ Feb. 9 at 8: "The Goldberg Variations" and "Symphony in C." . . . ¶ Feb. 10 at 2: "Allegro Brillante," "The Steadfast Tin Soldier," "Behind the China Dogs," and "The Four Seasons." . . . ¶ Feb. 10 at 8: "The Goldberg Variations" and "Stars and Stripes." . . . ¶ Feb. 11 at 3: "Ancient Airs and Dances," "Romeo and Juliet," "Huoah," and "Western Symphony." . . . ¶ Feb. 13 at 8: "Divertimento No. 15," "The Waltz Project," and "The Four Seasons." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through Feb. 25.)

Merce Cunningham Dance Company—Although Cunningham has always given his male dancers wonderful things to do, until recently the best men's parts in the repertory were the choreographer's own great roles from his own great prime. But in 1991 a Swiss marvel named Frederic Gafner joined the troupe, and you couldn't see him dance his bravura solo in "Enter" (1992) without being reminded of the young Cunningham: the movement fit him like a glove. The choreographer has been making dances for him ever since. "I really met Cunningham through 'The Dancer and the Dance,'" Gafner said recently, referring to Jacqueline Lesschaeve's published conversations with the choreographer. "It was an intellectual bond: I could see what he was saying, and I felt I had to study with him." So Gafner jumped ship, departing the Stuttgart Ballet for New York and modern dance. "Six months as a student, six months as an apprentice, somebody left—and I was in." And how. Gafner is currently appearing with the company in a week of "Events," the novel programs in which Cunningham combines old and new material. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Feb. 7-10 at 8 and Feb. 11 at 2 and 7:30.)

"Drift"—When improvisational dancer Alison Salzinger turns to choreography, she tends to cast children, bodybuilders, dogs, and carpenters, among other affinity groups. Her current engagement includes "Round Corner," a piece inspired by impossible chores; and "In My Shoes," for man, woman, and nine-year-old boy. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Feb. 8-11 at 8:30.)

"Chhau Dances of India"—The thirty-two-member Chhaya Academy of Arts, under the direction of Pandit Gopal Dubey, performs traditional dance of northeastern India, in cream or yellow human masks topped with animal figures. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Feb. 11 at 3.)

Veryovka Ukrainian National Dance Company—The fourscore members of the Kharkov-based folk-dance company perform eighteen works, including "Taras Bulba," glorifying Cossack audacity; "The Fern Is Blooming," with maidens singing and dancing around the eponymous plant; the patriotic "It's Not Thundering in the Steppes"; and "On the Meadow," a tale of a tomcatting Cossack. (Lehman College Concert Hall, the Bronx. 1-718 960-8833. Feb. 10 at 8.)

Kazuo Ohno—The eighty-nine-year-old Butoh dancer performs "Watashi no Okasan" ("My Mother"), directed by Yoshito Ohno, his son. (Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. 752-3015. Feb. 6-7 and Feb. 9-10 at 8.)

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

Alanis Morissette—"Jagged Little Pill," the major-label début by this twenty-one-year-old Canadian whippersnapper, has now sold more than five million copies, which makes it one of the biggest débuts ever, a testament not to her talent—an above-average roar and a gift for compressing sexual outrage into pithy couplets—but to the scouting and marketing genius of the maverick who signed her, Madonna, mogul of the year. Someone get that lady a cigar. With Loud Lucy. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 247-0200. Feb. 7-8 at 8.)

Ron Horton Ensemble—The knotty compositions of sixties iconoclast Andrew Hill cry out for revival; Horton will attempt to navigate their melodic twists and harmonic briar patches. With the Frank Kimbrough group. (Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. 995-1552. Feb. 8 at 8.)

"Ella, Billie, Sarah, and Carmen"—As interpreted by the Carnegie Hall Jazz Band and vocalists Ernestine Anderson, Nnenna Freelon, Tess Marsalis, and Carol Sloane. John Faddis directs. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Feb. 8 at 8.)

Elise Wood and John Hicks—A part-time flute-and-piano partnership now well into its second decade. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. 229-5689. Feb. 9 at 6.)

Red Hot Chili Peppers—With their bare chests and thumping athleticism, the Chili Peppers have a tendency to come off like funk-rock Fabios, but the diverse songwriting and surprisingly grownup sentiments on "One Hot Minute," their latest album, may help change that. The addition of former Jane's Addiction guitarist Dave Navarro, an adept and versatile player, and production by the bearded rock guru Rick Rubin have emboldened the band, making this hodgepodge of jazz, speed-freak thrash, and pop sophistication easily their most potent effort. Their fine 1991 single, "Under the Bridge," is rivalled here on several uncommonly restrained tracks, particularly "Tearjerker," a striking eulogy to Kurt Cobain. With Silverchair and the Rentals. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Feb. 9 at 7:30.)

Festa di Carnavale—Southern Italian folk music. (Washington Square Church, 135 W. 4th St. 545-7536. Feb. 9 at 8.)

Shafaatullah Khan—Playing the *surbahar*, a bass sitar. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Feb. 10 at 8.)

Blur / The Rentals—Don't tell Oasis, but this waggish foursome may well be the most celebrated band in England since the Smiths. Its newest release, "The Great Escape," tightens the band's grip on the British imagination, a trend that began in 1994, when "Parklife"—a gleefully satiric collection that captured just about every mood in the history of British rock—unexpectedly broke through, making chameleonlike songwriter Damon Albarn the object of the kind of praise that was once reserved for Ray Davies (see below) and Pete Townshend. Show up early for the bespectacled Rentals, a spinoff effort by members of Weezer and That Dog; they specialize in the kind of robotic quirkiness pioneered by Devo, giving nerds everywhere a reason to press on. (Roseland. Feb. 10 at 8.)

Concierto del Amor—Salsa, merengue, hip-hop, and rap with Gilberto Santa Rosa, Tito Rojas, and others. (Madison Square Garden. Feb. 10 at 8.)

Tone: Cyberfemme—An evening of ambient and experimental music, primarily by female composers. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Feb. 10 at 9.)

Ray Davies—With the possible exception of The Who's Pete Townshend, Brother Ray is the first British Invasion rocker to segue gracefully into middle age. Last year he put the Kinks on hiatus and released a wonderful quasi-autobiography called "X-Ray" (written in the third person, with a protagonist called R.D.) and embarked on a book tour that turned out to be a solo acoustic gig interspersed with a handful of lively readings. Now the fifty-one-year-old Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee is back with "20th Century Man," a fleshed-out theatrical version of the acoustic book tour. The flesh consists of two acts, stage and lobby trimmings, and a parlor-piano player—"Barnum & Bailey stuff," according to Davies. "It's not like I'm going out there with a script and Trevor Nunn. In fact, this really isn't much different from anything I do with the Kinks." After a moment's thought he adds, "I haven't got the mime together, though." Far more influential than he's usually given credit for (even Townshend admits that he stole from the Kinks), this great songwriter should be as incorrigible as ever. And the fate of the Kinks? "To be completely honest," he says, "it's the same answer I gave back in 1964—I don't know. But I do like working in a team. So, as far as the Kinks go, if we can still work together and it's not torture, we'll keep on making records." (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 741-0391. Feb. 12 at 7:30. Continues Feb. 14-18.)

Lenny Kravitz—"God loves everyone," Kravitz observes on his latest album, "Circus," but you can't help thinking that this young rocker sounds less like a messenger and more and more like Patrick Buchanan. Kravitz suffers from the conviction that the present age is artistically bankrupt; under a Kravitz administration, we'd all wear flared pants and tickle one another with daisies. Though the retro act is not without its giddy appeal—he certainly fakes it admirably, down to the period instruments, recording equipment, and accoutrements—there are other revisionists (Karl Wallinger of World Party, for instance) who are better songwriters. With Poe. (Roseland. Feb. 13 at 7:30.)

CLUBS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Decent sight lines, great greasy food, prodigiously talented waitresses, and a consistent roster of high-quality acts. Feb. 7-8: Rockapella. Feb. 9: **NEW RIDERS OF THE PURPLE SAGE.** Back in the early seventies, these Grateful Dead protégés probably launched a million joints with their album "The Adventures of Panama Red." The smoke-ringed posse is still led by John (Marmaduke) Dawson, and once again includes guitarist David Nelson and pedal-steel-guitarist Buddy Cage. Feb. 12: **SON VOLT.** Reborn from the same ashes that gave us Wilco, Son Volt features raggedy guitars, stark acoustic plucking, and cut-to-the-bone tales that make its début album, "Trace," a dark, down-and-out vision.

Brownies, 169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (420-8392)—Feb. 9: **FREEDY JOHNSTON** warms up for his Mercury Lounge gig.

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Dedicated to the music of the Windy City. Feb. 9-10: **OTIS RUSH.** Some bluesmen may be nothing more than hollow collections of pat phrases and rictal poses, but Rush is the real deal: the sandpaper in his voice and the groaning simplicity of his guitar transcend all manner of pain and suffering. An essential experience.

The Cooler, 416 W. 14th St. (229-0785)—A lavender and stainless-steel dungeon deep in the heart of the meat district.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—Feb. 9-10: **SUSAN MC KEOWN AND CHANTING HOUSE.** Feb. 13: **SPOOKY REUBEN.** The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—This sprawling two-floor establish-

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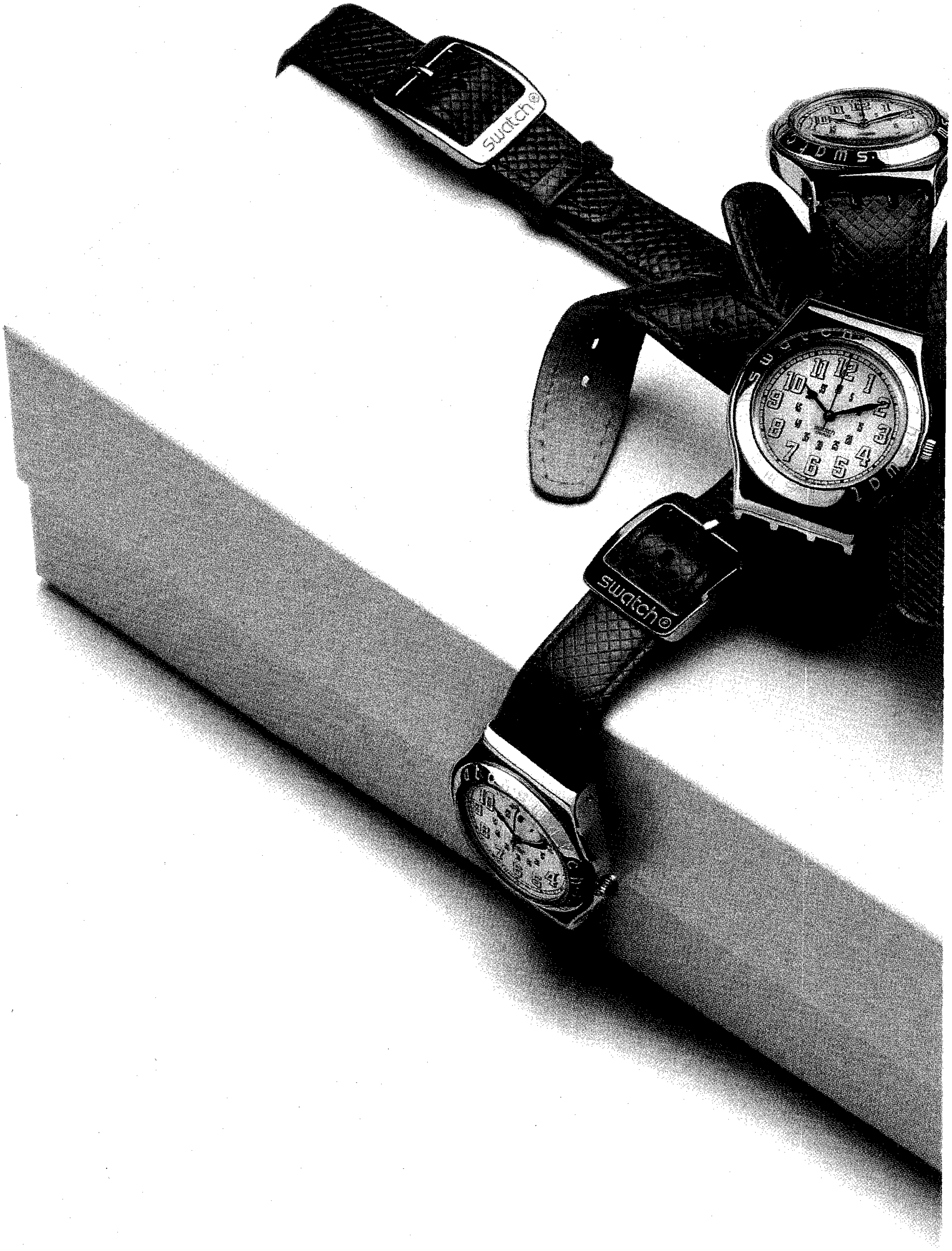
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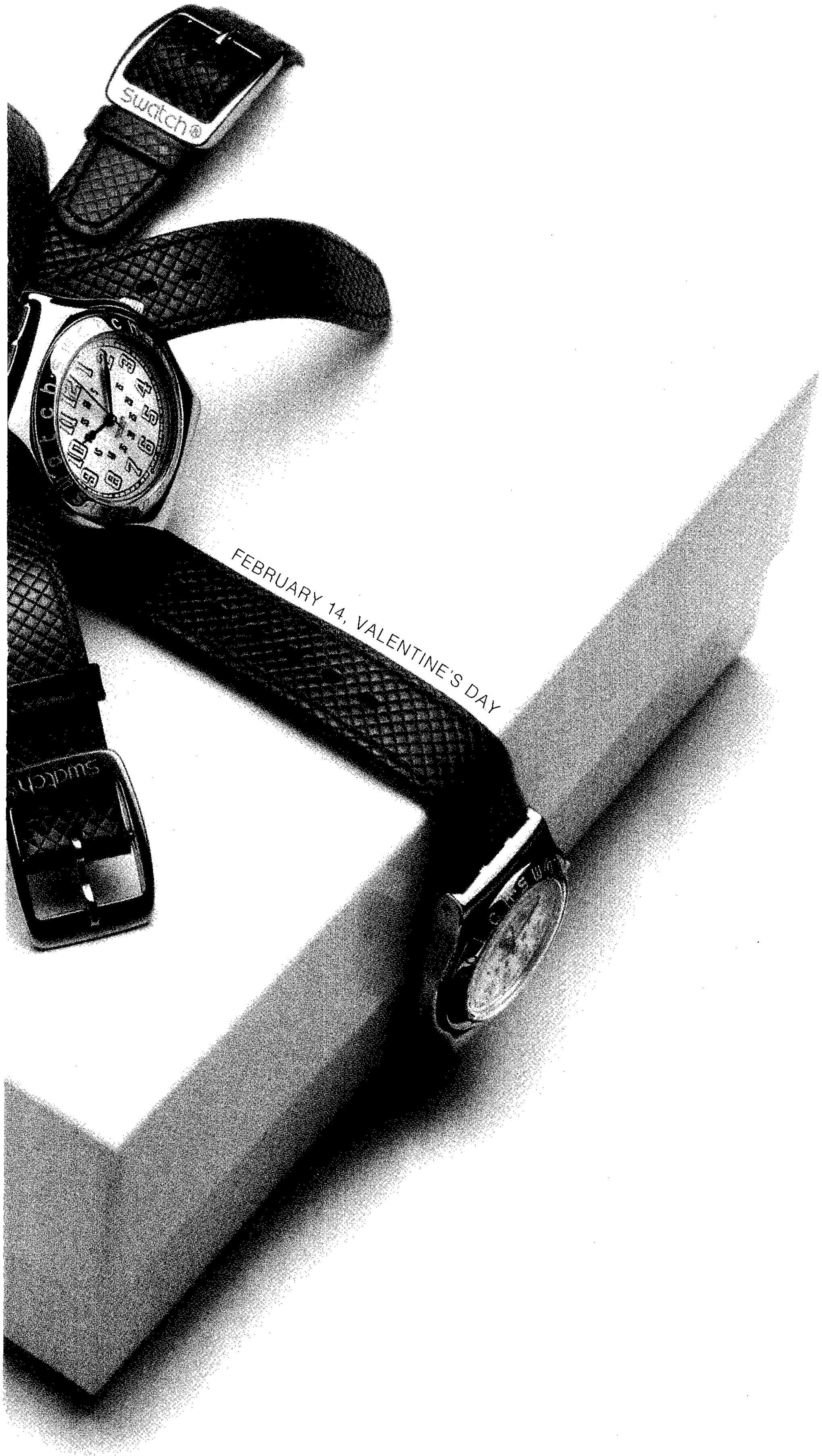
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IRONY

SWISS MADE

ment has been all things to all people: meeting hall, rock club, jazz club, Off Broadway theatre. Feb. 7: TESLA. Feb. 8: SPACEHOG and TRACY BONHAM. If the Spiders from Mars had been a real band, they might have cut "Resident Alien," the soon-to-be-released début by this glam outfit originally from Leeds and now based in New York. Powered by the zircon-throated Royston Langdon and his guitar-playing brother, Anthony, the Hogs have a classic blokes-from-down-the-road charisma and a handful of anthems that would make Spinal Tap proud. Bonham is an up-and-coming rocker with a background in classical violin. Feb. 10: THE VOLUPTUOUS HORROR OF KAREN BLACK. . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday, with sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Feb. 8: CAKE LIKE. Feb. 9: The STRAPPING FIELDHANDS, a ragged combo that evokes the reckless spirit of honky-tonk; the stuff that made Milwaukee famous has a way of actually making these guys sound pretty good. With Bardo Pond.

Manny's Car Wash, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—Feb. 7: SLEEPY LA BEEF, an Arkansas legend who is reputed to know six thousand songs; his sets are always full of surprises.

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Feb. 10: FREEDY JOHNSTON has a knack for churning out exacting folk rock with a convincing Midwestern twang; his songs bristle with careful detail and piercing language. His mostly perfect "This Perfect World" (1995) captured a misshapen planet inhabited by broken folks pushed to desperate measures. He should know: he sold the family farm to support his career, an experience chronicled on his superior 1992 record, "Can You Fly" (which began with the line "Well, I sold the dirt to feed the band").

Nell's, 246 W. 14th St. (675-1567)—A Victorian-style club, home to an eclectic crowd of downtown youngsters dancing to throbbing funk and techno-pop.

Les Poulets, 16 W. 22nd St. (229-2000)—The name may be French, but the music here is Latin: expect salsa, merengue, and, now and then, a cha-cha. Dining.

Rodeo Bar, 375 Third Ave., at 27th St. (683-6500)—The walls simulate a log cabin, a buffalo head blows smoke through its nostrils, a horse trailer has been converted into a bar, and you get peanuts for eating and, sometimes, throwing.

S.O.B.'s, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut with a fruit-and-bamboo motif, dedicated to calypso, reggae, and the bossa nova. Dining.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Feb. 10: MORRIS DAY and THE TIME. Like Apollonia, Vanity, and to a lesser extent Shelia E., Sheena Easton, and Kim Basinger, Morris Day is one of the many talents fostered and then forgotten by the Artist Formerly Known as Prince. Back in 1981, the Time was the best band in Minneapolis, and, though the group also featured Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis (who later distinguished themselves as producers for Janet Jackson), the clear leader was Morris Day. (The Time's début album was actually a collaboration between Prince and Day.) Day was the perfect foil to the purple one's brooding-introvert persona: a zoot-suited Lothario, he performed tunes like "Even Gigolos Get Lonely" and kept a mirror and a valet onstage. By the time Prince made the movie "Purple Rain," in 1984—was it really twelve years ago?—Day had perfected the act, and, in a classic case of being in the right place at the right time, he achieved a sort of comic apotheosis by more or less playing himself. He walked away with the film, but stardom did not follow. Now he's back, with a semi-official version of the Time—Jam and Lewis will not be in attendance—but that doesn't mean the funk will be any less ferocious. And when they break into "Jungle Love," just see if you can stand still.

Webster Hall, 125 E. 11th St. (353-1600)—A byzantine disco wonderland with four floors, a coffee shop, and a wig boutique. Wednesday is drag night. Psychedelic Thursdays feature grunge acts and cheap beer.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—After nearly thirty years as one of the most imitated (and, lately, most sampled) instrumentalists in soul and funk history, LEO NOCENTELLI, the founding guitarist of New Orleans' fabled Meters left the band to front his own group. He lights up this vast environmentally friendly club on Feb. 9.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Just after the first song of his good-natured, swinging set, guitarist and vocalist JOHN PIZZARELLI (in through early March) tells the crowd how great it is to be back in the hippest jazz room in New York: "I hear Charlie Parker used to hang out here." His brother Martin, the bassist, whispers something in his ear. "Oh, wait. That was *Dorothy* Parker—well, she was hip, too." Pizzarelli's brand of impudent goofiness brings a fresh breeze to the stuffy old Oak Room, whose acts of late seem to have forgotten that they're in the unofficial birthplace of the great American smart-aleck. An agile musician and a pleasant low-key crooner from the Chet Baker/Alfalfa school, he is solidly backed by Ray Kennedy on piano, making this the best-sounding cabaret act in town. Dining.

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—An airy two-tiered space with pastel walls and potted greenery. Feb. 8-9: Third Rail. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Feb. 11: a piano-and-guitar master class with the GEORGE SHEARING trio and the TAL FARLOW trio. Shearing can convince you that affability isn't a dirty word in jazz piano. Working with his excellent bassist, Neil Swainson, he spins out perfectly balanced choruses of gleaming melody in a style that mixes swing, bop, and decorum in equal measure. Farlow has been known to duck the spotlight for extended spells, but lately he's been braving the jazz clubs he once professed to hate, still playing the serpentine guitar lines and vaporous harmonics that brought him acclaim in the late forties. TITO PUENTE AND HIS GOLDEN LATIN JAZZ ALL-STARS have the floor starting Feb. 13. Puente, the grand old man of salsa, loves his jazz, too. Rhythmic excitement is guaranteed: this guy's timbales could make a polka band swing. And don't bother requesting the Puente-cum-Santana hit "Oye Como Va"—chances are it's already on the set list. Dining.

Lenny Kravitz, at Roseland.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—On any given night, and well into the morning, one or another of New York's many formidable pianists can be found here. Through Feb. 10: Piano, vibes, and bass, with JAMES WILLIAMS, STEVE NELSON, and ESSIET ESSIET. Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and, through late February, the legendary EARTHA KITT. She is still a fierce and funny performer with a feral grip on her audience. At the end of a song she'll throw back her head and laugh, like some kind of carnivore after the kill; she chooses her victims from the front row, and when the show is over there's blood on the tables. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, PETER MINTUN is in attendance.

Fifty Seven Fifty Seven, 57 E. 57th St. (758-5757)—A cool, sumptuous piano-and-bass room in the Four Seasons Hotel, with twenty-two-foot-high ceilings, a long backlit bar stocked with single-malt Scotch, and fine jazz seven nights a week. Dining.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through Feb. 11: RANDY WESTON has steeped himself in the music of North Africa, but there's still plenty of Brooklyn bop left in his piano; combining the jagged pith of Thelonious Monk, the fragrant harmonies of Duke Ellington, and the nasty rhythms of Bud Powell, he has a musical personality as urban as the M.T.A. DOROTHY DONEGAN grabs a handful of keys on Feb. 13. Now in her seventies, Donegan can still scare your pants off with her wild, free-association piano discourses. She'll try anything, even the impossible, interpolating classical themes into Tin Pan Alley, slinging off Tatum volleys and romping through stride passages when the spirit moves her. It's on-the-edge stuff.

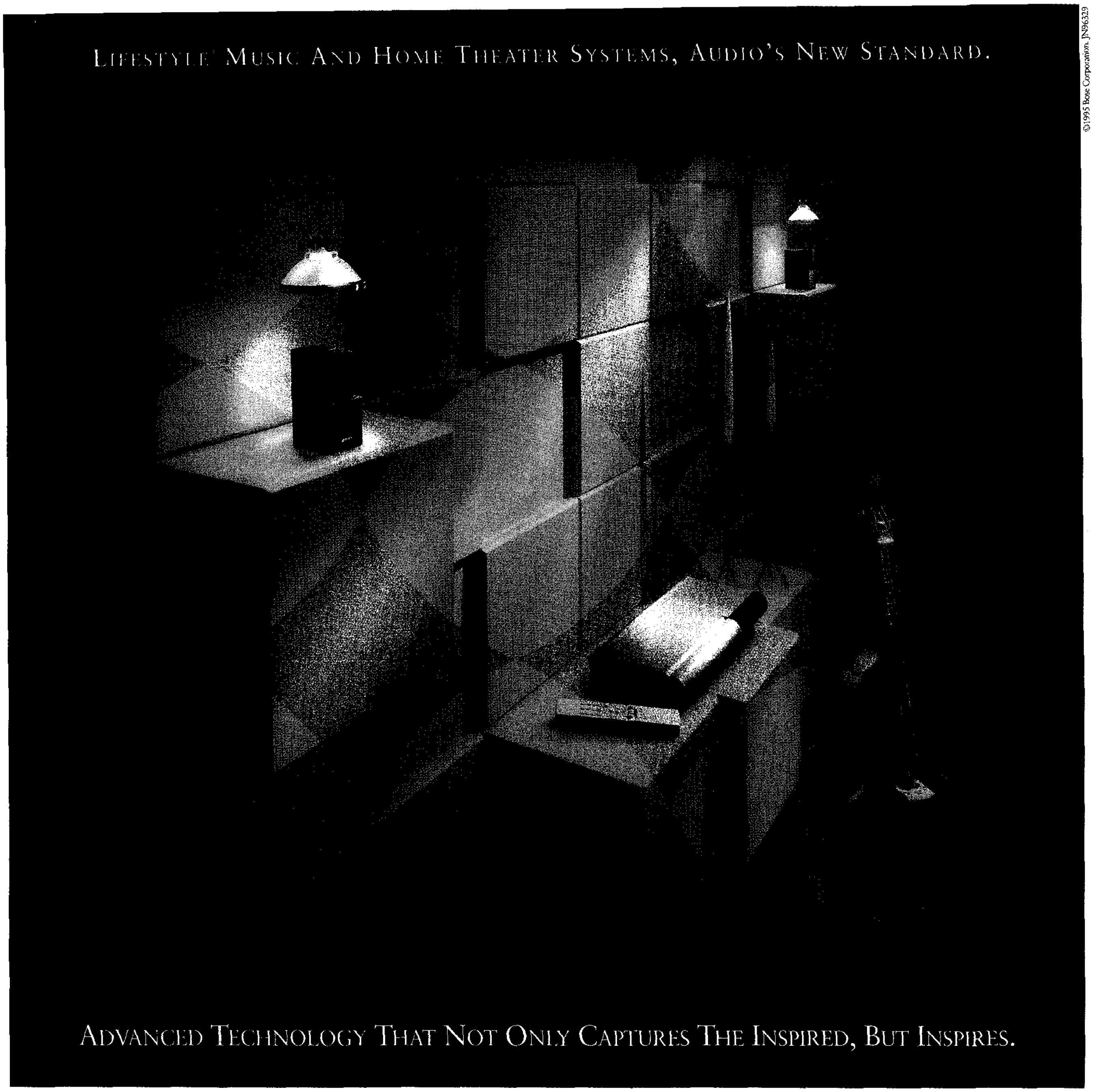
Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Brass rails, vintage posters, Hirschfeld drawings, and a piano. Feb. 7-10: DADO MORONI and PETER WASHINGTON. No muss, fuss, or fancy extras—Moroni plays bop piano pure but not simple. On bass is Washington, he of the brawny tone and the impeccable timing.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Feb. 13: DAVE HOLLAND. What is Holland's greatest gift—his extraordinary bass work or his knack for assembling first-rate bands? Holland (who comes to New York far too rarely for a certified jazz titan) has kept his mind open: fashionable neoclassicism may hold no interest for him, but relentless swinging still does.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—It's February—time again for ROSEMARY CLOONEY. (Too bad February is the shortest month of the year.) Forty-five years after her first big hit, "Come On-a My House," Clooney's voice is still warm and welcoming. In performance, she's fresh and bouncy and funny, and, like Tony Bennett, she's been attracting an ever broadening audience of hipsters. Her new record, "Dedicated to Nelson" reprises the classic big-band arrangements Nelson Riddle wrote for her nineteen-fifties variety show. She appears with a fourteen-piece band, featuring her longtime musical director, John Oddo. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Rainbow Room, there's a revolving dance floor, plus swinging big-band music courtesy of the Rainbow Room Orchestra, featuring vocalists Sean Mahony and Claudette Sierra. Closed Mondays.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Feb. 9-11: The JOHN CLARK octet. Clark remains one of the premier french-horn virtuosos in jazz (though it's

ROBERT MELEE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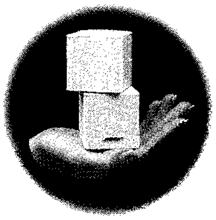

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not exactly a field loaded with competition). His bands are invariably quick-witted, sleek, and right in step with the whirly permutations of his music.

Tavern on the Green, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—This legendary tourist haven makes serious jazz fans welcome in the Chestnut Room, which resembles a hunting lodge and is every bit as over-the-top as the rest of the establishment. Case in point: **JIMMY SCOTT,** who is now in the midst of a two-week run. With good reason, the alarmingly androgynous singer has dropped the "Little" that used to front his name—there's nothing diminutive about his talent, and he can count Madonna and Ray Charles among his admirers. Even in songs you've heard dozens of times before, Scott makes you listen for the next lyric as if it were a password to love and happiness.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The **ART FARMER** quintet has the floor for the next two-weeks. Farmer's work on the flugelhorn proves that urbanity has its place in jazz's spontaneous and emotional universe. By picking the perfect notes and playing them with a burnished elegance born of utter precision, he makes virtues of control and calculation. His sophisticated, ardent playing distills bop down to a pure lyrical state. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

Visiones, 125 Macdougal St., at W. 3rd St. (673-5576)—Feb. 7-10: The **ARTHUR BLYTHE** quartet. Blythe may yet become the alto-saxophone superstar he's been threatening to become for the past twenty years (at this point a midlife kick in the pants à la Joe Henderson wouldn't hurt), but he still sounds like no one else: with his nervy note choices, an unmistakable keening tone, and punctiliously ordered improvisations. He's a stately avant-gardist. Dining.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—Through Feb. 10: piano and bass with **HAROLD MABERN** and **JAMIL NASSER.** Dining.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Poussin: Works on Paper." Sixty-five sketches and careful preparatory studies by the founder of French Classicism, from the collection of Queen Elizabeth II. Through March 31. . . . ¶ A complementary exhibit of seventeenth-century French drawings from the museum's collection is also on display. . . . ¶ The museum's African galleries have reopened, after a nine-month renovation; on view are more than four hundred works from the kingdoms of Benin, Owo, Ijebu, Danhomé, Bangwa, and many others. . . . ¶ Events in the life of Telephos, a son of Hercules, were recorded in a narrative relief on the Great Altar in the ancient city of Pergamon, in what is now northwest Turkey. Twelve restored sections of the frieze are on exhibit, along with a model of the altar, Hellenistic coins from the city, and architectural fragments. Through April 14. . . . ¶ "Textiles of Late Antiquity" features Egyptian tunics, scarves, shoes, brightly colored hats, and other garments, together with domestic decorations, from the fourth century through the seventh. Through April 7. . . . ¶ Six early-sixteenth-century Flemish tapestries depicting Christian themes are on view. Through March 31. . . . ¶ "Haute Couture." Detail and tailoring are the focus in the Costume Institute's examination of high fashion since 1870, from Worth to Lacroix. Through March 24. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—An installation of twenty-four Brancusi masterworks is on display; fourteen are from the Georges Pompidou Center, in Paris, the rest from MOMA's collection. Through April 23. . . . ¶ A large retrospective of black-and-white photographs from the late forties to the present by Roy DeCarava. Among the subjects are jazz musicians, street and subway life, and urban civil-rights protests. Through May 7. . . . ¶ "Sol LeWitt Prints, 1970-1995." Through May 7. . . . ¶ "Michael Schmidt: U-NI-TY," a hundred black-and-white photographs by the Berlin native. The theme—reunification—is clear, but the presentation is oblique. Half of the pictures are Schmidt's; the other half are images rephotographed from newspapers, magazines, and propaganda literature. Through March 26. . . . ¶ The "Projects" series presents knitted and embroidered works by Oliver Herring and Leonilson. Through March 12. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Abstraction in the Twentieth Century: Total Risk, Freedom, Discipline." A hundred and forty paintings and sculptures, with special sections on Kandinsky, Mondrian, Pollock, Rothko, Martin, Hesse, Serra, Puryear, and several others. Starts Feb. 9. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"Joseph Cornell: Cosmic Travels." Box constructions and collages from the fifties and sixties by America's homegrown Surrealist. Through March 10. (Another show of Cornell's work is at C & M, 45 E. 78th St., through March 2.) . . . ¶ "Moving Out," a survey of photographer Robert Frank's career. Through Feb. 11. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—"Amber: Window to the Past." During the Mesolithic Period (9000-6000 B.C.), human beings carved amulets out of fossilized tree resin. But all sorts of things—butterflies, tree frogs, geckos—were getting stuck in amber at a considerably earlier date; the oldest known fossils are entrapped in ninety-four-million-year-old amber from New Jersey. Starts Feb. 10. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"A Slice of Schiaparelli: Surrealism in Fashion." Fifty examples of the stylish inspirations of Elsa Schiaparelli (1890-1973): evening gloves with reptilian scales; a day suit with metallic ladybugs, grasshoppers, and cockroaches creeping across it; a hat of celluloid grapes; and more. Through March 24. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—Contemporary wooden, metal, ceramic, and glass vessels from the White House collection of American crafts are currently in residence. Through Feb. 25. . . . ¶ "Craft in the Machine Age, 1920-1945," a host of objects—furniture, textiles, vases, turned bowls, cocktail shakers, crystal—whose creation was influenced by modernist aspects of Scandinavian, French, and Bauhaus design. Through Feb. 25. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

China Institute, 125 E. 65th St.—"Calligraphy as Living Art" features a wide variety of scrolls and celebrates the beginning of the Year of the Rat (or the mouse, depending on your point of view; the character is the same). Through March 9. (Open Mondays through Saturdays, 10 to 5, and Tuesday evenings until 8; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"A Great Heritage" comprises a hundred and three of the best sheets in the Duke of Devonshire's drawing collection and includes some of the greatest drawings by Leonardo, Raphael, Rembrandt, and Rubens. Actually, every work on display here is among the best of its kind. There are two breathtaking red chalk drawings by Annibale Carracci: an awkwardly sprawled youth, nude except for floppy boots, and a half-length study of a hunchbacked boy, with the touching inscription (probably in the artist's hand) "I don't know if God helps me." Van Dyck's watercolor of an English landscape with castle (circa 1632) anticipates the Romantics by more than a century and a half. Through April 21. . . . ¶ Scarcely less fascinating is "The Art of the Brontës," a roomful of drawings, manuscripts, juvenilia, and personal effects from Anne, Charlotte, Emily, and their brother, Branwell. The most moving objects are the memorabilia: Emily's hair necklace, Anne's collection of seashore pebbles, Charlotte's tiny gloves. Through April 14. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—"Explorations in the City of Light" presents paintings and sculptures by seven African-American artists who lived in Paris between 1945 and 1965: Edward Clark, Barbara Chase-Riboud, Harold Cousins, Beauford Delaney, Herbert Gentry, Lois Mailou Jones, and Larry Potter. . . . ¶ "The Listening Sky," a display of works in the museum's new sculpture garden. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

André Masson (1896-1987)—The most tasteful of the Surrealists spent the years 1941-45 as a war exile in New Preston, Connecticut; this small exhibition offers a tantalizing glimpse of the work he produced there. A chimera squaring off with a serpent, wrought in a calligraphic style, has the gravity of literary mythology rather than the visceral impact of a dream. A touching portrait of the artist's son Luis is executed in tempera and sand, with the subject's name scrawled in a great, prideful loop across the image. Through March 2. (Zabriskie, 41 E. 57th St.)

Nina Roos—In her first American exhibition, this Finnish abstractionist reveals a refreshingly direct approach that invokes the spirituality and inner glow of such New York artists as Newman and Rothko. Blurs of intense pastel colors drift across Plexiglas, suggesting vignettes from an alternative universe of light, air, and music. Through March 2. (Yoshii, 20 W. 57th St.)

"New York Folk"—New York City has produced its share of self-taught visionaries, too. This well-curated, well-annotated exhibit of paintings by Lawrence Lebduska (1894-1966), Abraham Levin (1880-1957), and Israel Litwak (1868-1960) brims with fantastic invention and exuberant fun. In one of Lebduska's imaginary landscapes, pandas frolic in a pastoral countryside that looks a lot like Connecticut. Levin, who was born in Russia, paints scenes of village life with an intense vision and a sophisticated palette that suggest Chagall. Litwak's fussily detailed architectural studies have a distinctly postmodernist banality. Through March 16. (Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St.)

"Baziotes, Kamrowski, and Pollock"—A small exhibition neatly pulls together some of the best Surrealist works by three American painters: modest little visions, lacking in the grandiosity and deliberate bizarrerie of their European prototypes but eloquent and charming nonetheless. Through Feb. 24. (Washburn, 20 W. 57th St.)

"The House Transformed"—Conceptual, clinical, impressionistic, and fantastic treatments, including works by Bernd and Hilla Becher, Gordon Matta-Clark, Joel Shapiro, Siah Armajani, and H. C. Westermann. Through March 2. (Mathes, 41 E. 57th St.)

"Jewish Tradition in the Russian Avant-Garde"—Drawings, collages, rare illustrated books, and photographs, by El Lissitsky, Ilya Chashnik, Marc Chagall, Georgi Zelma, and others. Through March 2. (Schickler, 52 E. 76th St.)

Short List—**JOSEF ALBERS,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. Through Feb. 17. . . . **ANDRÁS BÖRÖCZ,** Baumgold, 128 E. 72nd St. Through March 9. . . . **RICHMOND BURTON,** Marks, 1018 Madi-

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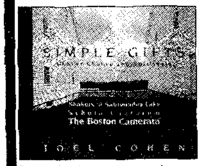


Boston Camerata—*Simple Gifts. Shaker Chants & Spirituals (Erato)* **137-836**

Ravel: *Dapnis et Chloe; La Valse, Pierre Boulez, cond. (DG)* **137-539**

Gershwin Plays Gershwin—*The Piano Rolls, Vol. 2 (Nonesuch)* **137-810**

Shostakovich: *Sym. No. 8. Andre Previn cond. (DG)* **136-879**

Bach: *Brandenburg Concertos Nos. 1, 2, 3. Pearlman. Boston Baroque (Telarc)* **114-025**

Enescu: *Symphony #2; Roumanian Rhapsodies 1 & 2. Andreescu cond. (Olympia)* **113-993**

Bach: *Six Duets. Schulz, flute; Schellenberger, oboe (Sony Class.)* **113-514**

Wynton Marsalis—*London Concert. Haydn, Hummel, Fasch. (Sony Class.)* **113-035**

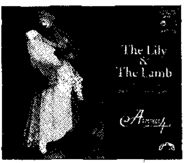
Prokofiev: *Romeo And Juliet "Highlights." Myung-Whun Chung cond. (DG)* **108-266**

Itzhak Perlman—*Bits And Pieces (EMI Classics)* **108-142**

John Browning Plays Domenico Scarlatti. *(Musicmasters)* **108-100**

Paganini: *Violin Concerto No. 1;* **Saints-Saens:** *Havanaise, etc. Sarah Chang (EMI Classics)* **108-076**

Beethoven/Mozart: *Piano Quintets. Barenboim & members Chicago, Berlin Sym. (Erato)* **103-481**



Anonymous 4—*The Lily & The Lamb; Chant and Polyphony from Medieval England (Harmonia Mundi)* **137-802**

Beethoven and Schumann: *Piano Quartets. I. Stern, Y. Ma; E. Ax; J. Laredo. (Sony Class.)* **486-662**

Borodin: *Symphonies Nos. 1 & 2; etc. Ashkenazy (London)* **486-555**

Rachmaninoff: *Sym. No. 2; The Rock. Mikhail Pletnev cond. (DG)* **486-548**

Shostakovich: *Sym. No. 13 "Babi Yar." N.Y. Phil. & Chorus; Masur cond. (Teldec)* **485-581**

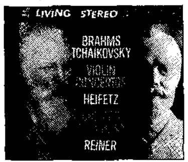
Beethoven: *String Quartets Nos. 6 & 7. Cleveland Quartet (Telarc)* **484-162**

Hovhaness: *Sym. No. 2 "Mysterious Mountain." Schwarz cond. (Delos)* **477-745**

Placido Domingo—*Opera Classics (EMI Classics)* **477-737**

Chant—*Benedictine Monks Of Santo Domingo De Silos (Angel)* **477-067**

Schubert: *Die Winterreise. Fischer-Dieskau; Brendel at the piano. (Philips)* **476-846**



Jascha Heifetz—*Brahms & Tchaikovsky Violin Concertos (RCA Living Stereo)* **132-936**

Chopin: *Piano Con. #2; 24 Preludes. Maria Joao Pires (DG)* **118-174**

Beethoven: *Sym. No. 3 "Eroica" & Sym No. 5. John Eliot Gardiner cond. (Archiv)* **118-158**

Schubert: *Piano Sonatas in B Flat & A Major. Radu Lupu (London)* **118-141**

Shostakovich: *Sym. No. 5;* **Mendelssohn:** *Sym. No. 4. Solti cond. (London)* **118-133**

Maria Callas—*La Divina 3 (EMI Classics)* **118-125**

Liszt: *A Faust Symphony for Tenor, Orch. & Chorus. Rattle cond. (EMI Classics)* **118-109**

Pepe Romero—*Noches De Espana: Romantic guitar classics (Philips)* **118-075**

Smetana: *Ma Vlast (My Fatherland). Mehta cond. (Sony Class.)* **117-754**

"Immortal Beloved"—*Orig. Sndtrk. (music of Beethoven) (Sony Classical)* **114-504**

Frederica von Stade—*Voyage a Paris. Ravel, Debussy, Satie, etc. (RCA Red Seal)* **135-475**

Jessye Norman Sings Alban Berg *(Sony Classical)* **121-269**

Sylvia McNair—*The Echoing Air, Music Of Purcell (Philips)* **120-808**

Mozart: *Piano Sonatas 5 & 11; more. Ivo Pogorelich (DG)* **120-790**

Debussy: *La Mer; Jeux; Nocturnes; etc. Boulez cond. (DG)* **120-782**

Stravinsky: *Pulcinella; Petrouchka. R. Chailly cond. (London)* **120-774**

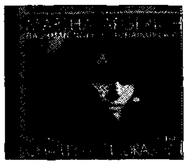
Rameau: *The Grand Motets. Christie cond. (Erato)* **120-220**

Kronos Quartet—*Performs Philip Glass (Nonesuch)* **119-107**

Chopin: *Ballades, Etudes, Mazurkas. Murray Perahia, piano (Sony Class.)* **119-016**

Lehar: *The Merry Widow. Soloists: Studer, Terfel; Gardiner cond. (DG)* **119-008**

Brahms: *Symphony No. 3; Alto Rhapsody. Sard Vannes; Haitink cond. (Philips)* **118-935**



Rachmaninoff: *Piano Con. #3;* **Tchaikovsky:** *Piano Concerto #1. Martha Argerich, piano (Philips)* **135-749**

Vladimir Horowitz—*Discovered Treasures (Sony Class.)* **450-502**

Mozart: *Symphony No. 39; more. Giulini, Berlin Philharm. (Sony Class.)* **449-207**

Gorecki: *Sym. No. 3. Dawn Upshaw; Zinman, London Sinfon. (Elektra/Nonesuch)* **441-923**

Kathleen Battle & Wynton Marsalis—*Baroque Duet. (Sony Classical)* **439-372**

Dvorák: *Sym. No. 9; Slavonic Dances. Masur cond. (Teldec)* **435-602**

The 3 Tenors—In Concert: *Carreras/Domingo/Pavarotti (London)* **423-418**

Tchaikovsky: *Sym. No. 4; Romeo & Juliet. Abbado cond. (CBS Master.)* **378-679**

Bernstein—*Copland: Appalachian Spring (Suite); etc. N.Y. Phil. (CBS Master.)* **357-889**

Julian Bream—*Guitar Sonatas: Paganini, etc. (EMI Classics)* **137-794**

James Galway—*Bach: Flute Concertos; Trio Sonatas; etc. (RCA Gold Seal)* **132-886**

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Bo Skovhus—*Schubert's Last Songs (Sony Classical)* **137-588**

Mozart/Beethoven/Brahms: *Trios for Piano, Clarinet & Cello. Ax, Stoltzman, Ma (Sony Class.)* **135-574**

Alicia De Larrocha—*Spanish Songs, Dances (RCA Red Seal)* **135-483**

Sequentia—*Hildegard von Bingen: Canticles Of Ecstasy (Deutsche Harm. Mundi)* **135-293**

Marilyn Horne—*Rossini Recital (RCA Red Seal)* **135-442**

Mozart: *Posthorn Seranade; more. Abbado cond. (Sony Classical)* **378-679**

Bach: *Suites For Cello. Mstislav Rostropovich (EMI Classics)* **131-540/391-540**

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Celtic Keyboards—*duets by Field, Trimble, Osborne. Garuelmann and Posner, piano duo (Koch)* **103-861**

Rimsky-Korsakov: *Scheherazade;* **Stravinsky:** *Scherzo Fantastique. Chailly cond. (London)* **489-112**

Kathleen Battle—*So Many Stars (Sony Classical)* **135-798**

James Galway—*Flute concertos by Mozart, Bach, Telemann, etc. (RCA Red Seal)* **133-280**

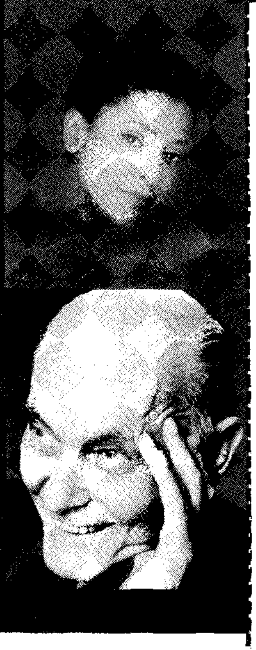
Julian Bream And John Williams—*Together: Albeniz, Carulli, Lawes (RCA Gold Seal)* **133-132**

The Reiner Sound. *Ravel, Liszt, Weber, etc. Reiner, Chi. Sym. (RCA Living Stereo)* **133-124**

Beethoven: *Symphony No. 9 "Choral." Solti cond. (London)* **135-772**

Christmas Gregorian Chants. *Various artists (Milan)* **488-429**

Chanticleer—*Mexican Baroque (Teldec)* **487-017**



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Bryn Terfel—*Vagabond English Songs: Ireland, Vaughan Williams, Finzi, others (DG)* **135-731**

Van Cliburn In Moscow: *Brahms: Piano Con. #2; Rachmaninoff: Paganini Rhapsody. (RCA Red Seal)* **132-928**

Vaughan Williams: *Sym. No. 1 "A Sea Symphony." L. Slatkin cond. (RCA Red Seal)* **133-082**

Vivaldi: *7 Concerti For Woodwinds & Strings. Trevor Pinnock cond. (Archiv)* **133-025**

Rachmaninoff: *Preludes (complete) Alexis Weissenberg (RCA Gold Seal)* **133-017**

Artur Rubinstein—*Brahms And Schumann: Piano Quintets (RCA Victor)* **132-944**

Mozart: *"Haffner" Serenade. Stern, violin; Rampal cond. (Sony Classical)* **131-672**

Mozart: *Serenade for Wind Instruments K.361. Zubin Mehta cond. (Sony Classical)* **131-664**

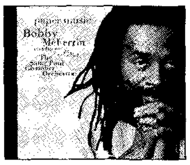
Beethoven: *"Archduke" Trio; Brahms: Trio In B. Previn, Mullova, Schiff (Philips)* **131-508**

Beethoven: *Missa Solemnis. Solti cond. (London)* **131-490**

Barbara Hendricks—*Barber: Knoxville-Summer Of 1915; more; Copland: Quiet City; etc. (EMI Classics)* **131-474**

Yevgeny Kissin—*Prokofiev: Piano Conc. 1 & 3. (DG)* **113-001**

Pavarotti & Friends 2 *(London)* **131-284**



Bobby McFerrin—*Paper Music (Sony Classical)* **133-041**

Mozart: *7 Violin Concertos. A. Grumiaux; Davis cond. (Philips)* **475-558/395-558**

Mahler: *Symphony No. 5. Abbado, Berlin Phil. (DG)* **473-363**

Schubert: *"Trout" Quintet; Quartett D.96. James Levine, piano; members of Berlin & Vienna Philharmonics (DG)* **473-355**

Mozart: *Oboe Conc.; Bassoon Concerto; more. Koopman cond. (Erato)* **469-635**

Orff: *Carmina Burana. Mehta, London Phil. & Choir (Teldec)* **469-593**

Cecilia Bartoli—*The Impatient Lover (London)* **469-148**

Pachelbel: *Kanon; Tchaikovsky: Serenade For Strings. L. Slatkin cond. (Telarc)* **462-655**

Holst: *The Planets. Previn, Royal Philharm. (Telarc)* **462-564**

Wagner: *The "Ring" Without Words. Maazel, cond. (Telarc)* **462-549**

Handel: *Water Music. Mackerras, St. Luke's Orch. (Telarc)* **462-523**

Beethoven: *Piano Conc. #5 "Emperor." Rudolf Serkin, Ozawa cond. (Telarc)* **462-416**

LIVING STEREO
BARTÓK

Bartok: *Concerto For Orchestra; Hungarian Sketches; etc. Reiner, Chicago Sym. (RCA Living Stereo)* **132-894**

Richard Strauss: *Der Rosenkavalier Suite; more. Jesus Lopez Cobos cond. (Telarc)* **131-276**

Beethoven: *Piano Sonatas, Op. 2, Nos. 1-3. Murray Perahia (Sony Class.)* **130-013**

Weber: *Symphonies Nos. 1, 2; more. Roger Norrington conducting (EMI Classics)* **129-981**

Brahms: *Ein Deutsches Requiem. Blomstedt cond. (London)* **129-957**

Webern: *Quartet & Trio For Strings. Emerson Quartet (DG)* **129-932**

Bartok: *Divertimento; Dance Suite; etc. Boulez cond. (DG)* **129-650**

Messiaen: *Les offrandes oubliees; more. Myung-Whun Chung cond. (DG)* **129-643**

Bach: *Goldberg Variations. D. Sitkovetsky's transcriptions for strings (Nonesuch)* **126-102**

Tchaikovsky: *Pas De Deux–Famous Waltzes. Kurt Masur conducting (Teldec)* **126-094**

Mahler: *Symphony No. 6. Pierre Boulez cond. (DG)* **123-042**

Tchaikovsky: *Sym. No. 6 "Pathetique." von Karajan, Vienna Phil. (DG)* **469-510**

THE PLANETS
John Eliot Gardiner
THE WARRIORS

Holst: *The Planets;* **Grainger:** *The Warriors. John Eliot Gardiner cond. (DG)* **137-521**

The Artistry Of Christopher Parkening *(EMI Classics)* **459-859**

Leonard Bernstein—*The Final Concert (DG)* **455-006**

Ravel: *Rapsodie Espagnole; Bolero; etc. Barenboim, Chicago Sym. (Erato)* **454-181**

Hilliard Ensemble—*Officium (ECM)* **134-056**

Enrico Caruso Sings Verdi Arias: *Don Carlo; Aida; Otello; etc. (RCA Gold Seal)* **133-363**

Jussi Bjoerling—*At Carnegie Hall (RCA Gold Seal)* **133-348**

Katia And Marielle Labeque—*Espana—Albeniz, Falla, Lecuona, Infante (Philips)* **118-927**

Luciano Pavarotti—*Pavarotti In Central Park (London)* **118-851**

Mendelssohn: *A Midsummer Night's Dream. Ozawa (DG)* **118-182**

Mozart: *Requiem. Giulini, Philharmonia (Sony Class.)* **408-575**

Dennis Brain—*Mozart: Horn Concertos (EMI Classics)* **121-285**

Schumann: *Sym. No. 3 "Rhenish" and No. 4. Nikolaus Harnoncourt cond. (Teldec)* **114-488**

EMI
THOMAS HAMPSON
GERMAN OPERA ARIAS
FABIO LUISI

Thomas Hampson—*German Opera Arias (EMI Classics)* **131-482**

Cheryl Studer—*Strauss: Four Last Songs; Wagner; Wesendonck-Lieder; more (DG)* **103-002**

Haydn: *Piano Sonatas Nos. 32, 47, 53 & 59. Emanuel Ax (Sony Class.)* **102-970**

Sibelius: *Violin Conc.;* **Bruch:** *Scottish Fantasy. Midori, violin; Mehta cond. (Sony Classical)* **102-947**

Yo-Yo Ma—*The New York Album. Music by Albert, Bartok, Bloch (Sony Classical)* **102-921**

Anonymous 4—*Love's Illusion (Harmonia Mundi)* **102-152**

Dawn Upshaw—*Canteloube: Songs Of The Auvergne (1923-30) (Erato)* **114-470**

Prokofiev: *Peter And The Wolf;* **Debussy:** *La boite a joujoux. Nagano cond. (Erato)* **114-264**

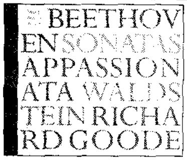
Respighi: *Fountains & Pines Of Rome; Roman Festivals. Sinopoli cond. (DG)* **466-243**

Rachmaninoff: *Vespers. Shaw Festival Singers (Telarc)* **462-499**

Mahler: *Symphony No. 4. B. Hendricks; Salonen, L.A. Philharm. (Sony Class.)* **449-116**

THE 4 SEASONS
VIVALDI
GIL SHAHAM
ORPHEUS

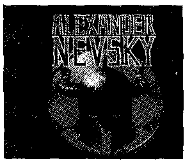
Gil Shaham—*Vivaldi: The Four Seasons; more. (DG)* **118-901**



Beethoven: *Piano Sonata No. 21 "Waldstein;" No. 23 "Appassionata." Richard Goode, piano (Nonesuch)* **137-828**

Maestro of the Met.

James Levine—*Maestro Of The Met. In celebration of his 25th Anniversary. Bartoli, Caballe, Domingo, many more. (DG)* **137-778**



Prokofiev: *Alexander Nevsky. First recording of the complete score. Temirkanov cond. (RCA Red Seal)* **132-993**

Herbert von Karajan—*Adagio (DG)* **129-635**

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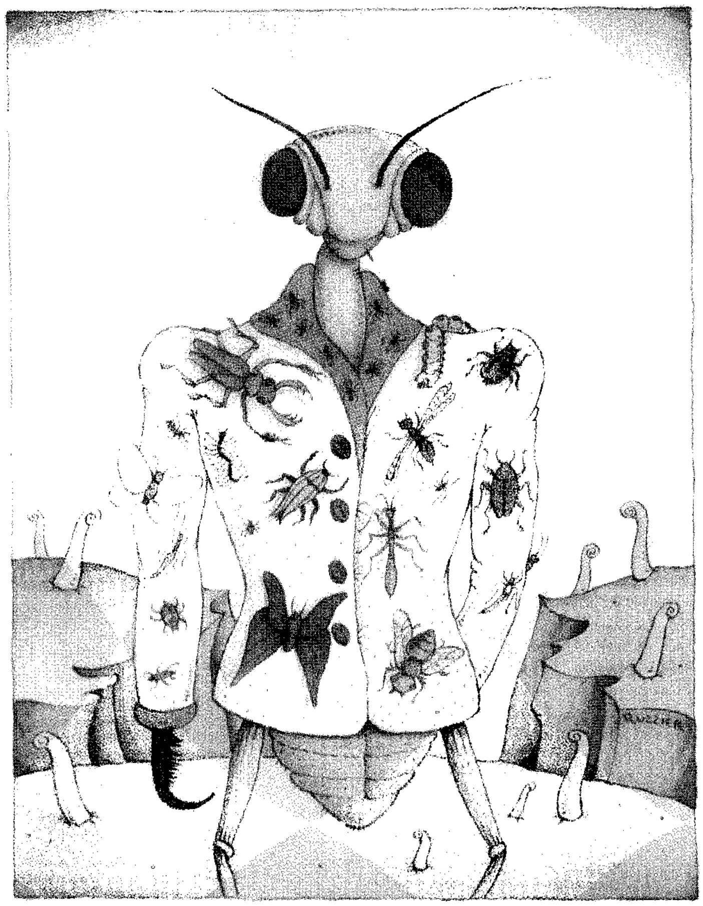
son Ave., at 79th St. Through March 2. . . . **ALEXANDER CALDER,** Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. Through Feb. 17. . . . **GRETNA CAMPBELL,** De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St. Through March 2. . . . **JOSEPH CORNELL,** C & M, 45 E. 78th St. Through March 2. . . . **LOIS DODD,** Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St. Through March 2. . . . **STEPHEN ELLIS,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. Through Feb. 24. . . . **DAN GRAHAM,** Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays; through March 2. . . . **A. R. PENCK,** Werner, 21 E. 67th St. Open Mondays; through Feb. 24. . . . **MILTON RESNICK** and **JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. Through March 9. . . . **JOSÉ MARÍA SICILIA,** Helman, 20 W. 57th St. Through Feb. 24. . . . **EVE SONNEMAN,** Janis, 110 W. 57th St. Through Feb. 24.


"A Slice of Schiaparelli," at the Brooklyn Museum.

SERGIO RUZZIER

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Maurizio Cannavacciuolo—"Insults and Bedtime Stories," a series of dizzyingly complex paintings exhibiting a wide variety of motifs and obsessions: sex, death, Orientalism, homoeroticism, science, archeology, and more. Overall, a spirit of science-fiction hysteria prevails; fans of MTV's "Aeon Flux" will discover a kindred sensibility. Through Feb. 24. (Sperone Westwater, 121 Greene St.)

Manny Farber—Colorfully painted pastiches of scattered objects—flowers, leaves, fruit, photographs—that have a pleasing kinetic energy. Through Feb. 17. (Cowles, 420 West Broadway.)

Lucio Fontana (1899-1968)—Paintings, sculptures, and ceramics from the fifties and sixties by the seminal Italian avant-gardist best known for his slashed monochrome canvases, a stunning selection of which is displayed in the rear gallery. Through Feb. 10. (Gladstone, 99 Greene St.)

Tom Friedman—Weirdly enchanting art works made from the humblest materials, sometimes scarcely visible: toothpicks, human hair, a wad of bubble gum. One wall is given over to a galaxy of construction-paper stars, each one individually designed and numbered and delicately pinned to the wall. Through Feb. 17. (Feature, 76 Greene St.)

Ellen Gallagher—Subdued, rather sombre abstractions à la Agnes Martin—or at least that's the initial impression one gets from these works by a young painter who was one of the few genuine surprises at last year's Whitney Biennial. Closer inspection reveals something stranger going on: waves of smiling, thick-lipped mouths, cascades of eyeballs, even the occasional schematic rendering of a woman's head or a forlorn elephant complicate the paintings' sensuous, fussed-over surfaces. Through Feb. 24. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

Elyn Zimmerman—Two big, awkward walk-in granite sculptures—or perhaps they should be described as environments—that look like they would be more at home in a corporate atrium. Zimmerman traffics in some hilariously blatant male-female symbolism (the pieces' titles are "XX" and "XY," as in chromosomes); she also piles on the archeological and art-historical references: antiquity, Mesoamerica, Stonehenge, Brancusi. . . . In sum, a mess. Through Feb. 17. (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St.)

"Epitaphs"—Death on the installment plan, the art-world way: some thirty works on the themes of mourning and morbidity, which add up to a rewarding group show. Andy Warhol's "Self-Portrait with Skull" (1978) depicts a dour-looking artist with an oddly jaunty death's-head perched on his shoulder like a parrot. The most amusing piece may be John Coplans' "Letter to My Son" (1995), which begins flatly "This letter is about the disposal of my body after my death. . ." and continues, with hilariously detailed and persnickety instructions regarding his cremation and the scattering of his ashes, to its sardonic sign-off: "Good Luck!" Through March 2. (Thorp, 103 Prince St.)

"Model Home"—The Institute of Contemporary Art's Clocktower gallery reopens with this show, which was conceived as a living space in which visitors may coo and criticize, just like they do in other people's homes. Parts of every room, from bar to bath, are here along with window treatments and swatches of wall, floor, and furniture coverings. Sarah Charlesworth, Robert Gober, Byron Kim, Frank Moore, Rona Pondick, Elaine Reichek, Lawrence Weiner, and Franz West are among the sixty artists involved. Opens Feb. 8. (108 Leonard St., between Broadway and Lafayette St. Open Thursdays and Fridays, 4 to 10; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 7.)

"Constructions" / Paul Laster—A hit-or-miss group of Constructivist sculptures. Anyone who likes to build stuff at home will covet Jackie Ferrara's "Jaktower," made of perfectly true, unblemished cedar two-by-fours. Michael Ashkin's tabletop tableau of miniature semi rigs rolling across a barren, snow-covered field is funny and unnerving. / New monochrome works in which the artist has lifted colors from magazines, applied them to transparent tape, and then collaged the tape onto vellum in abstract, weblike images. Through Feb. 24. (Klein, 40 Wooster St.)

"Wall Drawings '96"—Two large murals, by Barry McGee and Mark Dean Veca, employ variations on graffiti art and cartoons; Tania Mouraud elongates and expands the phrase "What you see is what you get." Through Feb. 10. (Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. Open Wednesday evenings until 8.)

Group Show—A blue-chip gathering of paintings and sculptures by John Chamberlain, Dan Flavin, Donald Judd, Sol LeWitt, Robert Mangold, Agnes Martin, Elizabeth Murray, Lucas Samaras, and Joel Shapiro. Through Feb. 10. (Pace Wildenstein, 142 Greene St.)

Group Show—Large-scale paintings by Francesco Clemente, Julian Schnabel, and Cy Twombly. Through Feb. 10. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St.)

Short List—**RITA ACKERMANN,** Rosen, 130 Prince St. Through Feb. 24. . . . **ROBERT BECK,** Inglett, 100 Wooster St. Through Feb. 17. . . . **ELLEN CANTOR,** Nordanstad, 289 Hudson St. Opens at 1; through Feb. 24. . . . **PETER DAYTON** and **ROBERT ADAMS,** Morris Healy, 530 W. 22nd St. Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6; through Feb. 18. . . . **PAUL DE MARANIS,** Bravin Post Lee, 80 Mercer St. Through Feb. 10. . . . **CATHY DE MONCHAUX,** Sean Kelly, 43 Mercer St. Through March 2. . . . **STEPHEN GREENE,** Beitzel, 102 Prince St. Through Feb. 10. . . . **ROBERT GROSVENOR,** Markey, 55 Vandam St. Through March 23. . . . **ALFRED JENSEN** and **OLIVER HERRING,** Protetch, 560 Broadway. Through Feb. 17. . . . **LARRY JOHNSON** and **ALLEN RUPPERSBERG,** Gorney, 100 Greene St. Through Feb. 17. . . . **ALEX KATZ,** Blum, 99 Wooster St. Through March 16. . . . **FORREST MYERS,** Art et Industrie, 52 Thompson St. Through Feb. 17. . . . **ALAN TURNER,** Lennon, Weinberg, 560 Broadway. Through Feb. 10. . . . **EUGENE VON BRUENCHENHEIN,** Ricco/Maresca, 152 Wooster St. Through Feb. 24.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

Doyle's—English and Continental furniture, paintings, and decorative arts. (175 E. 87th St. 427-2730. Feb. 7 at 10 A.M. . . . **NOTE:** On Feb. 9, from 10 to 2, Doyle's will offer a free verbal appraisal of up to five pieces of jewelry per visitor.)

Christie's East—Feb. 8 at 10 A.M.: Antique and fine jewelry. . . . ¶ Feb. 13 at 1: Nineteenth-century European paintings. (219 E. 67th St. 606-0400.)

Swann's—An auction of collectible books, including volumes with fore-edge paintings, tomes by Frank Baum and Lewis Carroll, and many sets. (104 E. 25th St. 254-4710. Feb. 8 at 10:30.)

Morrell's—Temptations for oenophiles go on the block, including twenty-three different 1961 Bordeaux and another fifty-two from 1970, fourteen vintages of Yquem going back to 1925, and Madeiras from as long ago as 1748. (Union League Club, 38 E. 37th St. Feb. 10. For information, call 668-9370.)

Armory Antiques Show—More than a hundred international dealers offer their wares at Wendy's annual winter show. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. Feb. 7-11. For information, call 472-1180.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Lola Alvarez Bravo (1907-93)—Two exhibitions of the pioneering Mexican modernist's work. (Americas Society, Park Ave. at 68th St. Open daily, except Mondays, noon to 6. Through Feb. 25. . . . ¶ Throckmorton, 153 E. 61st St. Through March 9.)

Sally Apfelbaum—Floral closeups in varying scales and focusses, taken in turn-of-the-century gardens in Normandy. Through Feb. 10. (Saul, 560 Broadway.)

Larry Clark—Nearly a hundred brightly colored snapshots of skateboarding young toughs in the streets and parks of New York City.

Through Feb. 24. (Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St.)

David Mosconi—"Night Skies," Polaroid triptychs of stars, nebulae, and a solar eclipse. For two of the panels in each triptych, Mosconi has appropriated images from observatories and anonymous nineteenth-century works; for the third, he has fabricated the heavens in the studio, using black cloth, smoke, and powder. Through Feb. 10. (Richardson, 560 Broadway.)

International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St.—"Fazal Sheikh: A Sense of Common Ground," portraits of Sudanese, Ethiopian, Somalian, Rwandan, and Mozambican refugees. Through March 31. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8. . . . **Note:** For information on an I.C.P. lecture series, see Above and Beyond.)

International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St.—"Eve Arnold: In Retrospect," black-and-white and color images from the photojournalist's forty-year career: politicians, diplomats, movie stars, religious leaders, artists, and musicians. Through Feb. 11. (Another show of Arnold's work is at Gallery 292, 120 Wooster St., through Feb. 10.) . . . ¶ "Country Beside Itself," Lars Tunbjörk's colorful, idiosyncratic exploration of Sweden's changing commercial and leisure pursuits. Through Feb. 11. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Short List—**Tom Baril** and **Rocky Schenck,** Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. Through Feb. 24. . . . **Peter Campus,** Cooper, 155 Wooster St. Through Feb. 17. . . . **Henri Cartier-Bresson** and **Toshio Shibata,** Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. Through Feb. 24. . . . **George Daniell,** Wessel-O'Connor, 60 Thomas St. Opens at noon; through Feb. 24. . . . **Willie Doherty,** Alexander and Bonin, 59 Wooster St. Closed Tuesdays; opens at noon; through Feb. 17. . . . **Mario Giacomelli** and **Jacques Henri Lartigue,** Danziger, 130 Prince St. Through Feb. 24. . . . **Jim Goldberg** and **Kiki Smith,** Pace Wildenstein MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. Through Feb. 24. . . . **Michael Johnson,** Witkin, 415 West Broadway. Through March 2. . . . **Michiko Kon,** Mann, 42 E. 76th St. Through March 2. . . . **Erich Lessing** and **France Bourély,** Leica, 670 Broadway. Opens Saturdays at noon; through March 6. . . . **Sean Mc Devitt,** Arstark, 568 Broadway. Through Feb. 24. . . . **Gilles Peress,** Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. Through Feb. 10. . . . **Neil Winokur,** Borden, 560 Broadway. Through Feb. 11.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

(The box-office number for Avery Fisher Hall is 875-5030, and for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**Falstaff,** with Barbara Daniels, Heidi Grant Murphy, Marilyn Horne, Stanford Olsen, Paul Plishka, and Gino Quilico; conducted by James Levine. (Feb. 7 at 8.) . . . With Ms. Daniels, Barbara Bonney, Ms. Horne, Mr. Olsen, Bruno Pola, and Haijing Fu; Mr. Levine. (Feb. 10 at 8.) . . . Opening performances of a new production of **Così fan tutte,** with Carol Vaness, Susanne Mentzer, Cecilia Bartoli, Jerry Hadley, Dwayne Croft, and Thomas Allen; Mr. Levine. (Feb. 8 at 8 and Feb. 13 at 7:30.) . . . **Turandot,** with Ruth Falcon, Angela Gheorghiu, and Lando Bartolini; Nello Santi. (Feb. 9 at 8.) . . . **Otello,** with Aprile Millo, Plácido Domingo, and James Morris; Mr. Levine. (Feb. 10 at 1:30.) . . . **Madama Butterfly,** with Diana Soviero, Wendy White, Franco Farina, and Juan Pons; Julius Rudel. (Feb. 12 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

"Orlando"—Les Arts Florissants, conducted by William Christie, revives its 1993 Aix-en-Provence Festival staging of Handel's 1733 opera; presented with English supertitles. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. Feb. 9 at 7 and Feb. 10 and Feb. 12-13 at 8.) . . . **Note:** On Feb. 11 at 3, members of Les Arts Florissants will perform an all-Handel concert at BAM's Carey Playhouse. (30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—Charles Dutoit is currently leading the orchestra in an exploration of Spanish music, particularly that of Manuel de Falla. (There is an exhibit on de Falla and his legacy on the promenade level of Avery Fisher Hall.) Feb. 8-10 at 8 and Feb. 13 at 7:30: Two movements from Albéniz's "Iberia" (as orchestrated by Enrique Arbós), Turina's "Danzas Fantásticas," Rodrigo's "Concierto Serenata" (with the orchestra's principal harpist, Sarah Bullen), and two works featuring mezzo-soprano Alicia Nafé: Montsalvatge's "Cinco Canciones Negras" and de Falla's Ballet Suite from "El Amor Brujo." (Avery Fisher Hall.) . . . ¶ Feb. 10 at 2: Mr. Dutoit and the orchestra offer a Casual Saturdays performance of the above works by Turina and de Falla. In addition, a troupe headed by singer Enrique Morente and guitarists "Tomatito" and "El Paquette" performs flamenco selections. (Avery Fisher Hall.) . . . ¶ Feb. 11 at 3: Members of the orchestra, plus several guests, perform Spanish chamber works, including Xavier de Paz's "Sentado Sobre un Golfo de Sombra" and de Falla's Harpsichord Concerto (with Kenneth Cooper) and "El Amor Brujo" (in its original chamber version, here spotlighting vocalist Carmen Linares). (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St.) . . . ¶ Feb. 11 at 7:30: A recital by guitarist Pepe Romero of Spanish music from the sixteenth century through the twen-tieth. (Merkin Concert Hall. For information about all of these events, call 721-6500.)

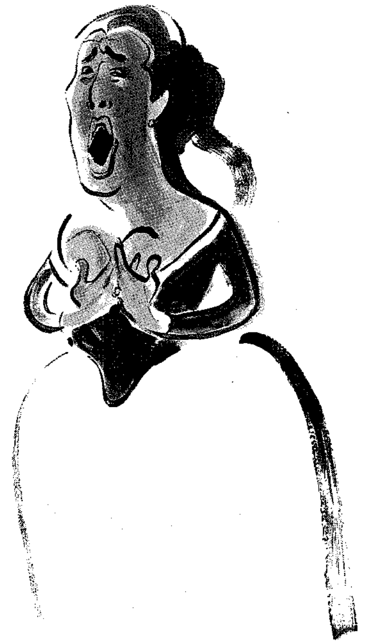
Choir of St. Ignatius Loyola—Kent Tritle directs Victoria's motet and Mass "O Quam Gloriosum," as well as Carissimi's "Jephte" (the most famous example of mid-seventeenth-century Roman oratorio). (Park Ave. at 84th St. 288-2520. Feb. 7 at 8.)

Orpheus Chamber Orchestra—The conductorless ensemble presents Stravinsky's "Danses Concertantes," Mozart's G-Major Piano Concerto (K. 453, with Jeffrey Kahane), and Tchaikovsky's "Souvenir de Florence." (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 10 at 8.)

Cappella Oratoriana—Dennis Bernard Delaney directs the choir and a continuo group in motets, spiritual madrigals, and other works from seventeenth-century Germany, by Schütz, Schein, and others. (St. Luke's in the Fields, 487 Hudson St., at Grove St. Feb. 10 at 8. Tickets at the door.)

Cantata Singers—David Labovitz directs Bach's six motets. (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. Feb. 11 at 2. Tickets at the door.)

Philadelphia Orchestra—Murray Perahia, an aristocrat among pianists, was sidelined after he nicked his thumb with a kitchen knife and, according to reports, failed to seek medical treatment until it was too late. In recent seasons, his American appearances have been very sporadic. By periodically releasing recordings, including splendid Chopin and Beethoven disks last year, Sony Classics has managed to keep his work before the public. (A Chicago critic went overboard last February, however, by publishing a rapturous review of "Perahia's" performance with the Chicago Symphony; the pianist turned out to be a substitute.) The fact is that Perahia has cancelled one appearance after another—including his Lincoln Center recital this past December—and no living pianist is so sorely missed. Nonetheless, at press time he was still scheduled to perform in this concert, although he has replaced his announced concerto, Beethoven's "Emperor," with the less taxing Concerto in E-Flat Major (K. 271) by Mozart; if he doesn't cancel, you can expect every pianophile in town to be there to welcome him back. Also on the program is Beethoven's Symphony No. 6 (the "Pastoral"). Wolfgang Sawallisch conducts. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 12 at 8.)



Cecilia Bartoli, in the Metropolitan Opera's production of "Così Fan Tutte."

DEMETRIOS PSILLOS

RECITALS

Chthonic Sonics—You can follow the gist of most opera plots so long as you remember this: ninety per cent of the time, the sopranos and tenors are good guys, while the mezzo-sopranos and basses are bad guys. (Don't ask about baritones; they're inexplicable, as any soprano will tell you.) Basses are the baddest, and they don't get far into their careers before they find themselves portraying that diabolical fellow with the horns and the pitchfork. Samuel Ramey, opera's reigning devil, offers a program of arias from the underworld, taken from Berlioz's "La Damnation de Faust," Meyerbeer's "Robert le Diable," Gounod's "Faust," Boito's "Mefistofele, Offenbach's "Les Contes d'Hoffmann," and Stravinsky's "The Rake's Progress." Julius Rudel conducts the Orchestra of St. Luke's (which rounds out the program with several symphonic excerpts relating to the lower realm). (Avery Fisher Hall. Feb. 7 at 8.)

Bargemusic—Violinist Arturo Delmoni and pianist Carol Archer perform Beethoven's G-Major Sonata (Op. 30, No. 3); Gervase de Peyer and Ms. Archer play Brahms's F-Minor Clarinet Sonata; and all three join for a trio by Khachaturian. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Feb. 8 at 7:30 and Feb. 11 at 4.)

Guarneri Quartet—The foursome plays Stravinsky's Concertino and string quartets by Mozart (in D Major, K. 499) and Beethoven (in A Minor, Op. 132). (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Feb. 8 at 8.)

Radu Lupu—The reclusive pianist performs Schumann's "Arabeske" (Op. 18) and "Davidsbündlertänze" (Op. 6), as well as Schubert's Sonata in A Minor (D. 845). (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 9 at 8.)

"Italienisches Liederbuch"—Soprano Benita Valente, baritone William Stone (in his New

York recital début), and pianist David Golub join to offer Hugo Wolf's assemblage of forty-six Paul Heyse settings. (Weill Recital Hall. Feb. 9 at 8.)

Schubertiade—The 92nd Street Y's decade-long festival moves into its penultimate installment, which investigates the personal and musical links between Schubert and Beethoven. Feb. 10 at 8: Lieder, part-songs, and instrumental music, performed by baritone Hermann Prey, tenor John Aler, and pianist Grant Johannesen, among others. . . . ¶ Feb. 11, from 1:30 to 6: A roundtable of scholars and performers, with live and recorded musical examples. . . . ¶ Feb. 11 at 8: The pianist John O'Conor possesses a fluid, well-bred, expressive keyboard idiom that especially suits music by composers of a lyric bent (such as Schubert) and yields a welcome alternative approach to Beethoven. He'll pursue this year's Schubertiade theme through a compare-and-contrast program: Beethoven's Sonata in E Minor (Op. 90) versus Schubert's in C Minor (D. 958), Beethoven's Six Bagatelles (Op. 126) versus Schubert's Twelve Waltzes (D. 145). (Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. This year's Schubertiade continues through Feb. 18.)

Garrick Ohlsson—The pianist proceeds with his traversal of Chopin's complete solo-piano works by performing the first two ballades, the Sonata No. 1, and the Scherzo No. 2, among other pieces. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Feb. 11 at 2.)

New York Festival of Song—"Poets who try to murder their gay lovers" may not seem like such a remarkable topic to audiences inured to Richard Bey, Jenny Jones, and Geraldo. But when the recently divorced Verlaine went after Rimbaud with a pistol in 1873, it was a pretty spicy story: the latter walked away with a wounded wrist, but Verlaine spent two years in a Belgian prison before falling into a life of increasing debauchery. Actor Sebastian Roché will read writings by and about both men, as well as excerpts from Christopher Hampton's 1968 drama, "Total Eclipse," about the two Symbolists' highly charged relationship (the play was filmed last year); he will pause for song settings of their poetry, by Fauré, Debussy, Reynaldo Hahn, Britten, and Lee Hoiby. The performing roster includes soprano Dominique Labelle, baritone Kurt Ollmann, and pianist Steven Blier. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Feb. 12 at 8.)

Wolfgang Holzmair—The baritone, who in the past decade has emerged as one of the world's preëminent song recitalists, performs the ne plus ultra of lieder, Schubert's "Winterreise." Pianist Ulrich Koella assists. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Feb. 13 at 8.)

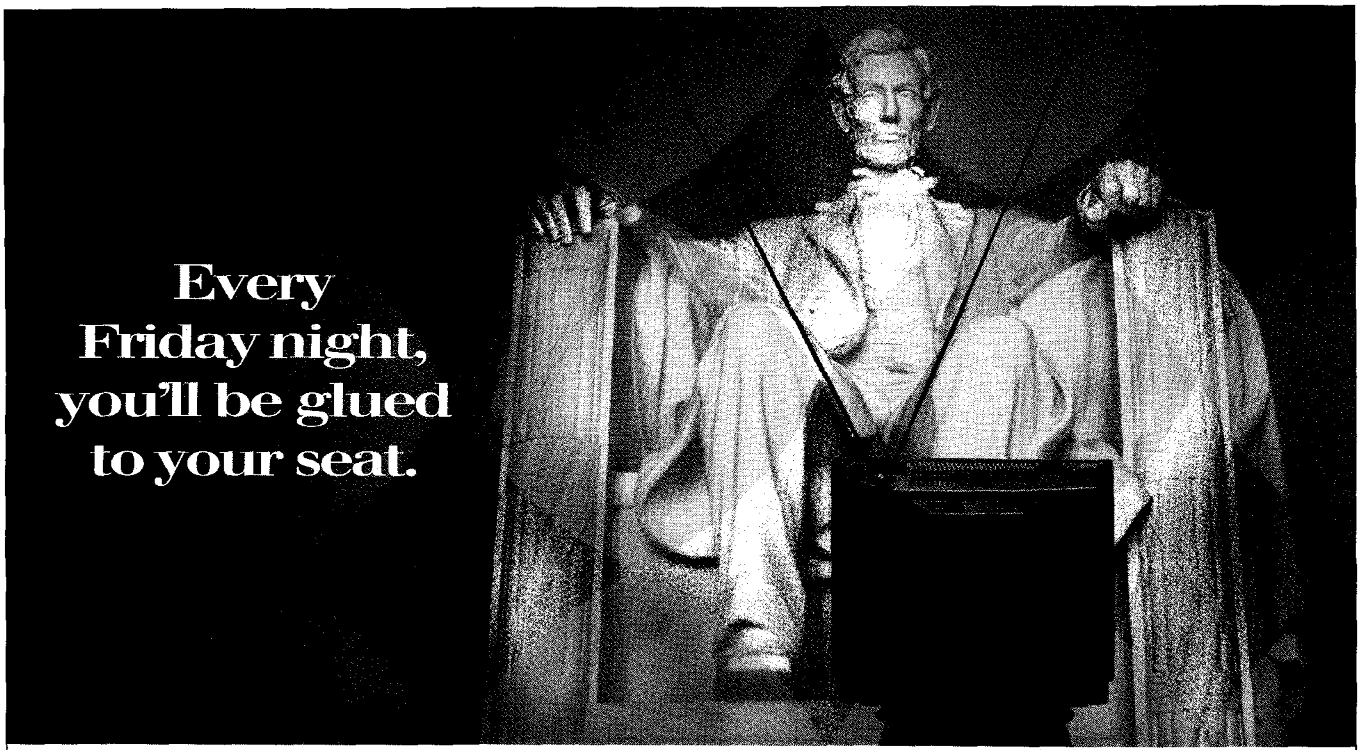
ABOVE AND BEYOND

Being There—Fazal Sheikh opens a lecture series on documentary photography with a talk about refugees displaced from their homes in Somalia, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Mozambique, and Sudan, accompanied by a slide show of his portraits of the nomadic families, war widows, elders, and orphaned children who, he wrote recently, "offered me their hospitality and instructed me in making these images." Sheikh's exhibition, "A Sense of Common Ground," runs through March (at the International Center of Photography, Fifth Ave. at 94th St.); the weekly lectures (at I.C.P. Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St.) continue on Wednesdays through April 10, with slides and commentary by Jodi Cobb, Dawoud Bey, and Ellen Von Unwerth, among others. (For more information, call 860-1777, ext. 156. Feb. 7 at 6:30.)

The Fat Lady Sings—Now that the bowl games are over, football fans can turn to other pursuits—opera, for instance. Former Cincinnati Bengal and All-Pro defensive tackle Mike Reid premières his first music drama, "Different Fields," about a star wide receiver who fails the boy who worships him. Mr. Reid, who has also made songs for Bonnie Raitt and Wynonna Judd, clearly hasn't abandoned his country-and-Western Weltschmerz: his family-fare opera concludes with the bittersweet aria "Who Are the Heroes Today?" (New Victory Theatre, 209 W. 42nd St. 769-7008. Opens Feb. 7 at 8. Through Feb. 18.)

Readings—Feb. 7 at 8: Al Franken reads from his recent book, "Rush Limbaugh Is a Big Fat Idiot, and Other Observations." (Barnes & Noble, Broadway at 82nd St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Feb. 10 at 1: Poets Elizabeth Macklin and Harold Ambler read from their work. (Belanthi Gallery, 142 Court St., at Pacific St., Brooklyn. No tickets necessary.)

Talks—Feb. 9 at 7: Irene Ankner leads her face-lift-defying workout, a cosmetic regimen that combines facial exercises, to tone and firm, and Chinese acupressure, to eliminate fine lines. Bring a hand mirror. (Open Center, 83 Spring St. 219-2527.) . . . ¶ Feb. 10 at noon and 2: In her remarks on the history and nobility of the common cur, museum lecturer Alexandra Givens cites a twelfth-century Latin bestiary that states, "None is more sagacious than Dog." (The Cloisters, Fort Tryon Park. No charge beyond museum admission.) . . . ¶ Feb. 10 at 1: In conjunction with an exhibition on the city's most famous murders, *New Yorker* reporter Andy Logan talks about the front-page politicking that led to the execution, in 1915, of the corrupt police lieutenant Charles Becker for shooting the gangster Herman Rosenthal. (New-York Historical Society, 2 W. 77th St., at Central Park W. No charge beyond museum admission.)



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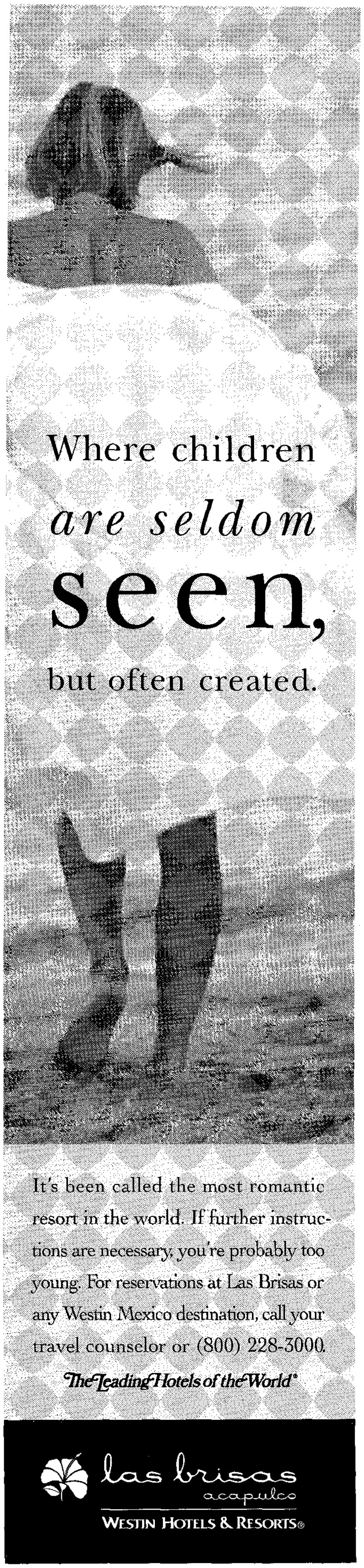

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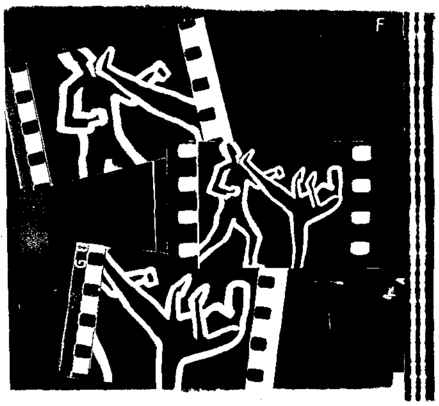


THE MOVIES

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

Beautiful Girls—Ted Demme's comedy, about the residents of a small town in Massachusetts, features an ensemble cast that includes Matt Dillon, Timothy Hutton, Rosie O'Donnell, Martha Plimpton, Michael Rapaport, Mira Sorvino, and Uma Thurman. Written by Scott Rosenberg. Opening February 9. (Angelika Film Center, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy 1.)

Broken Arrow—John Travolta and Christian Slater star in John Woo's thriller as fighter pilots who lock horns over an extortion plot involving a stolen nuclear weapon. Written by Graham Yost. Opening February 9. (Murray Hill Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Criterion Center.)

Hate—Writer-director Mathieu Kassovitz's drama about a riot in a Parisian housing project. With Said Taghmaoui, Vincent Cassel, and Hubert Kounde. In French. Opening February 9. (Village Theatre VII.)

Heidi Fleiss: Hollywood Madam—A documentary by Nick Broomfield, about the woman who ran a prostitution ring in Los Angeles. Opening February 9. (Quad Cinema.)

A Midwinter's Tale—Michael Maloney stars in Kenneth Branagh's romantic comedy as an unemployed actor who mounts a production of "Hamlet." (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) Opening February 9. (Village East Cinema and Lincoln Square.)

Shopping—A gang of thieves (Jude Law, Sadie Frost, Danny Newman, and Frazer James) sets out to rob a department store, in a drama written and directed by Paul Anderson. With Marianne Faithfull and Jonathan Pryce. Opening February 9. (Quad Cinema.)

CURRENT FILMS

(The signed notes are by Bruce Diones, Sarah Kerr, Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and James Wolcott. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given. Theatre information is listed on page 23.)

Angels & Insects—This film, based on an A. S. Byatt neo-Victorian novella, is flatly directed by Philip Haas, but at least the performances are handsomely framed. Patsy Kensit plays an aristocrat who lives on her looks (under the veil of her canopied bed, her skin glows with golden avarice), Kristin Scott Thomas a poor relation who cultivates her hobbies (she tends an ant farm); they share an interest in the same man, a naturalist played by Mark Rylance. Acting-wise, it's no contest: Scott Thomas turns in a beautiful portrait of poise, yearning, and sublimation. The sexy intrigue at the country estate is interspersed with so much insect footage that it becomes tough to tell the men from the moths. The movie is being released unrated because it offers a glimpse of an actor's dangly bits, which seem to be doing more than dangling.—J.W. (1/29/96) (Village East Cinemas and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Antonia's Line—A Dutch feminist fairy tale about an eccentric single mother (the impressive Willeke van Ammelrooy) who sets up housekeeping on a farm after the Second World War and takes all kinds of strays—from a retarded rape victim to a depressive, Schopenhauer-saturated intellectual—under her wing. The movie could be a crowd pleaser at art houses, but what it's packaging is little more than self-regard: Antonia and her clan are righteous, and anyone who gets in their way is a pig. Written and directed by Marleen Gorris. In Dutch.—S.K. (Angelika Film Center and Cinema II.)

Bed of Roses—A sweet romantic comedy about two lonely New Yorkers: Lisa (Mary Stuart Masterson), a workaholic executive who grew up in a loveless foster home, and Lewis (Christian Slater), a philosophical flower-delivery man. She has to learn how to open up; he must learn to curb his neediness. The leads are both fine, and, though the movie isn't great, as an alternative to the suicidal glamour of "Leaving Las Vegas" its mood of guarded optimism is more than welcome. Written and directed by Michael Goldenberg.—S.K. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Gotham Cinema, Orpheum VII, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, and Criterion Center.)

Black Sheep—Chris Farley stars as the ne'er-do-well brother of a politician (Tim Matheson), in a comedy directed by Penelope Spheeris. (34th Street Showplace, Gemini, East 85th Street, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Astor Plaza.)

Casino—Martin Scorsese's movie about Las Vegas in the seventies and early eighties clocks in at close to three hours, and the epic running time is absurdly disproportionate to the stature of the main characters: a mob-connected casino manager (Robert De Niro); his wife (Sharon Stone), a former hustler; and a vicious gangster (Joe Pesci). Scorsese certainly hasn't forgotten how to make a movie; what he appears to have forgotten is why.—T.R. (12/4/95) (Manhattan Twin and National Twin.)

The City of Lost Children—Marc Caro and Jean-Pierre Jeunet's nightmarish adult fantasy deserves a place beside such phantasmagorical film wonders as "Metropolis" and "Batman," but (like "Metropolis") it's a cold piece of work. The succession of dazzling images grows tiresome as the plot—about a man who steals the dreams of children—wanders aimlessly. The enterprise has a strongly Dickensian feel, complete with orphans on cobblestone streets, but it's as though the filmmakers had mined "Oliver Twist" for the set design and forgotten to tell the story.—B.D. (Angelika Film Center.)

Dead Man Walking—Tim Robbins's blunt, powerful movie tells the story of a murderer (Sean Penn) awaiting execution and a nun (Susan Sarandon) trying to save his soul—and, if possible, his skin. The filmmaker clearly hopes that familiarity with the grisly realities of capital punishment will finally breed contempt for the idea of premeditated, state-sponsored killing. And although the picture sometimes turns clunky and flat, as if it were sagging under the weight of its good intentions, it winds up being devastatingly effective. Penn has to reveal, within a reckless and apparently despicable character, a salvageable soul, and he makes the erratic rhythm of the condemned man's spiritual progress seem effortless and natural: he captures the languid, insinuating tempo of grace invading a locked-up spirit.—T.R. (1/8/96) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

Egon Schiele: Excess and Punishment—Herbert Vesely's film features Mathieu Carrière as the Austrian Expressionist who died in 1918 at the age of twenty-eight. With Jane Birkin, Christine Kaufmann, and Marcel Ophuls. In German. (Film Forum; through Feb. 13.)

French Twist—A sunlit French farce written and directed by Josiane Balasko, who also enjoys herself no end in the role of Marijo, a chunky, cheerful lesbian who wanders into the marriage of Loli (Victoria Abril) and Laurent (Alain Chabat) and churns it into a froth. Abril's trademark laugh pretty well sums up the picture's gusto, but the fun doesn't last: the story settles down, the characters call an uneasy truce, and Balasko even starts to moralize on the folly of love gone wrong. In French.—A.L. (1/15/96) (Quad Cinema and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

From Dusk till Dawn—In this picture, the sensibilities of the screenwriter, Quentin Tarantino, and the director, Robert Rodriguez ("El Mariachi," "Desperado"), don't so much mesh as simply take turns: the first half feels like Tarantino's movie, the second half like Rodriguez's. The film begins as a rather self-conscious modern Western in which bad guys (George Clooney and Tarantino) streak toward Mexico; as in "Reservoir Dogs" and "Pulp Fiction," the crooks have a tendency to babble inanely while threatening defenseless people with grievous bodily harm. For once, though, the logorrheic apprehension that Tarantino likes to build up actually has some sort of payoff: south of the border, the gunmen and their hostages are beset by hordes of vampires, and Rodriguez's berserk action style—weird weaponry, non-stop stunts, and samurai-speed editing—takes over. The movie's horror-comics second half is cheesy, derivative, and ultimately a little wearying. But it's also unpretentious and insanely cheerful. With Harvey Keitel, Juliette Lewis, Ernest Liu, Cheech Marin, Tom Savini, and Fred Williamson.—T.R. (2/5/96) (Angelika Film Center, Murray Hill Cinemas, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy 3. . . . ¶ Embassy 1; through Feb. 8.)

Get Shorty—John Travolta plays Chili Palmer, a small-time Miami loan shark who winds up in Hollywood, where he discovers his true métier and fulfills his destiny: he becomes a movie producer. Scott Frank's screenplay is based on an Elmore Leonard novel. The director, Barry Sonnenfeld, doesn't have the dexterity to trap the story's tiny, quick ironies; he works too strenuously for laughs. But Travolta's no-sweat acting—which deftly captures the dry comic tone of Leonard's prose—keeps the movie watchable. Also with Rene Russo, Gene Hackman, Danny DeVito, Delroy Lindo, and Dennis Farina.—T.R. (10/23/95) (59th Street East Cinema, Art Greenwich Twin, 62nd & Broadway, and Criterion Center.)

Heat—Michael Mann, the moving spirit behind "Miami Vice," turns his attention to Los Angeles, where an anguished cop (Al Pacino) goes head to head with a troubled villain (Robert De Niro). The film, which runs on and on for nearly three hours, yearns to be much more than a thriller—it wants to diagnose the sickness of men's souls and convey the nobility of their pain. The taciturn De Niro and the braying Pacino share a flawless scene over a cup of coffee, but the real honors go to Val Kilmer and Ashley Judd as a warring, loving couple.—A.L. (12/25/95-1/1/96) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, and Criterion Center.)

Jumanji—The title refers to an ancient board game with groovy powers; Robin Williams plays Alan, who was sucked into the Jumanji board as a boy and emerges twenty-six years later when a couple of kids (Kirsten Dunst and Bradley Pierce) open up the game and roll the dice. Cue all manner of special effects: spiders the size of hubcaps, elephants in the hallway. There's a touch of Spielberg in the way the director, Joe Johnston, makes these images work dramatically. The movie takes time to warm up, it weakens into soppiness at the end, and the game itself, if you think it through, makes very little sense. Most of the time, however, you don't have to think at all.—A.L. (12/25/95-1/1/96) (Lincoln Square, Olympia, and Criterion Center.)

The Juror—Demi Moore and Alec Baldwin in a thriller about the trial of a mobster. Directed by Brian Gibson. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (Village Theatre VII, Beekman, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Olympia, and Criterion Center.)

Lamerica—A drama by Gianni Amelio, about an Italian con man in post-Communist Albania. In Italian. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Last Summer in the Hamptons—A comedy in which Victoria Foyt plays a movie star who visits a Long Island theatrical family that is in the midst of producing a play. Directed by Henry Jaglom, who co-wrote the screenplay with Foyt. (Cinema Village and Angelika 57.)

Leaving Las Vegas—In Mike Figgis's startlingly beautiful new movie, Nicolas Cage gives a great performance as a failed writer who is consciously drinking himself to death. Figgis tells the story as a series of vivid, intense moments; the sole trace of conventional drama is the hero's affair with a kindhearted young hooker (superbly played by Elisabeth Shue). But the possibility that love will rescue him from his fate vanishes quickly, like a mirage. Although the movie is terribly, crushingly sad, its honesty is invigorating: it names its poison and downs it, neat.—T.R. (11/6/95) (Village East Cinemas, 34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

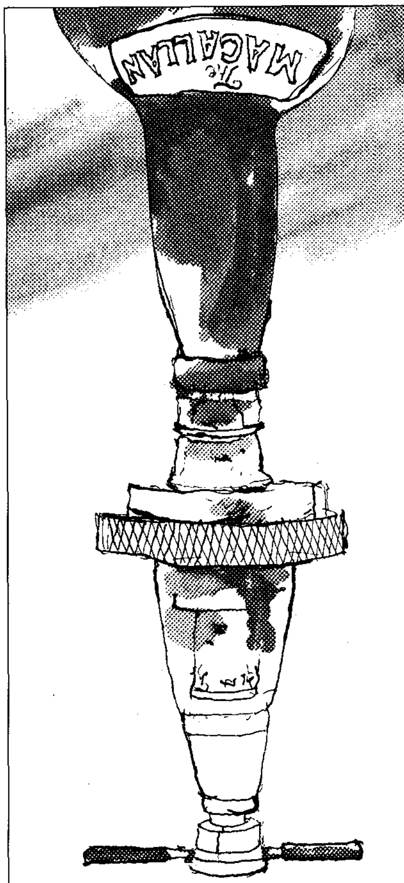
Mr. Holland's Opus—A film for the entire family, if you have no place else to leave them. Richard Dreyfuss speaks gruffly and carries a little baton as Glenn Holland, a musician who aspires to be a serious composer but finds his true calling as a high-school teacher. His students include Alicia Witt, whose clarinet squeaks, and Jean Louisa Kelly, who belts out a Gershwin tune until it slumps to the floor. Dreyfuss builds up a head of steam and ages persuasively (he looks like Ed Asner by the time Mr. Holland reaches retirement), but the movie is shameless in its efforts to extract tears from the audience, and Dreyfuss himself does his signature "choke": gulping, beating back tears with rapid eye blinks, then snapping a brave smile. Glenne Headly co-stars as Holland's chipmunk wife; Jay Thomas enjoys blowing his whistle as a coach.—J.W. (1/29/96) (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema I, 86th Street East Twin, and Lincoln Square.)

Nico Icon—German director Susanne Ofteringer's film—moody, melancholy, and technically extraordinary—documents the life of the Velvet Underground's chanteuse, Nico, from her beginnings as a model to her death, in 1988, as a pallid junkie. Throughout the movie, Niço's music plays practically non-stop: enigmatic dirges of longing and bitterness torn from a soul drugged to numbness by her successive environments (postwar Germany, Warhol's Factory, life on the road).—B.D. (Film Forum.)

Nixon—Oliver Stone's three-hours-plus biography of Tricky Dick (Anthony Hopkins) is, like its subject, awkward, sweaty, tenacious, and highly impeachable. As usual, the filmmaker has big ideas about the forces that have shaped recent American history: this Nixon is the helpless, sporadically conscience-stricken pawn of a sinister right-wing cabal that was responsible for Vietnam and, of course, the assassination of John F. Kennedy. Where does Stone find this stuff—in pumpkin patches? You could shell out seven or eight bucks at the multiplex and accept Stone's frivolous speculations as solemn truth. But it would be wrong. Also with Joan Allen (as Pat Nixon), James Woods (as H. R. Haldeman), and David Hyde Pierce (as John Dean).—T.R. (Village East Cinemas and Cinema 3rd Avenue.)

Once Upon a Time . . . When We Were Colored—Tim Reid's adaptation of the 1989 book by Clifton Taulbert, about growing up in Mississippi in the forties and fifties. Written by Paul W. Cooper. (Manhattan Twin.)

Othello—Oliver Parker's version of Shakespeare's tragedy—the first filmed "Othello" in which the Moor of Venice is played by a



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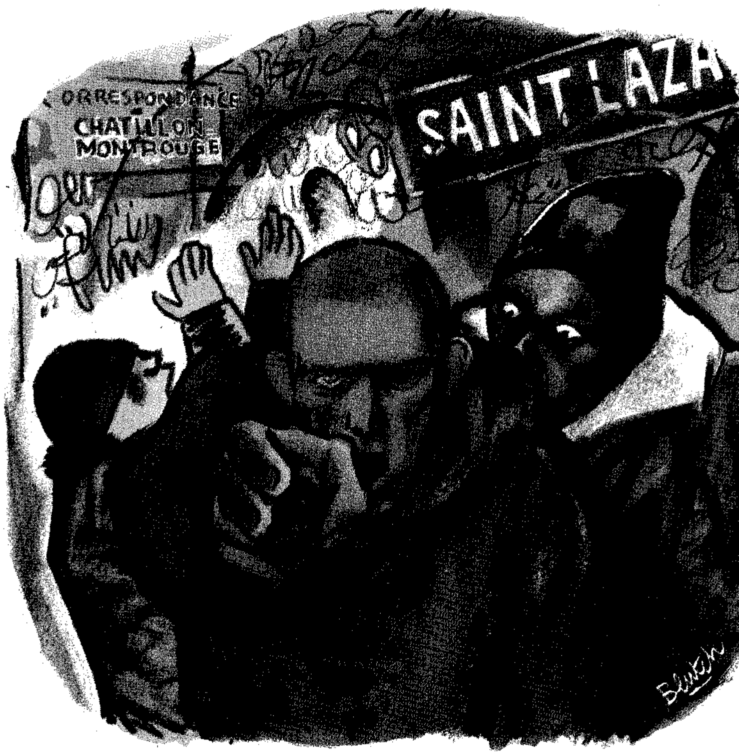
black actor (Laurence Fishburne)—follows the familiar-quotations principle of Shakespearean adaptation. By sacrificing the volcanic flow of language that conveys Othello's pride, confusion, and anguish, the movie leaves Fishburne stranded: his performance is mysteriously uncharismatic. Kenneth Branagh, who plays Iago, has a surer grasp of Shakespearean technique, and his bold, confident interpretation manages to cut through the muddle that Parker has made of the play. Who steals this picture, though, steals trash. With Irene Jacob as Desdemona.—T.R. (12/18/95) (Paris.)

Restoration—Michael Hoffman's film starts in the year 1660 and follows a young doctor named Merivel (Robert Downey, Jr.) through his epicurean excesses at the court of Charles II, his purgative sojourn among the Quakers, his selfless struggle against the plague, and his own restoration to royal favor. The sets and costumes are a dream, but the performers—Sam Neill as the ineffectual king, Meg Ryan as an Irish madwoman, and Hugh Grant as a foppish painter—are given no room to breathe; only David Thewlis, playing Merivel's Quaker colleague, delivers any real pathos. Adapted by Rupert Walters from Rose Tremain's novel.—A.L. (Angelika Film Center, 68th St. Playhouse, and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)



Opening February 9, Mathieu Kassovitz's "Hate."

Richard III—This fancy production—directed by Richard Loncraine, from a stage version by Richard Eyre—transports the scheming nobles of fifteenth-century England to the nineteen-thirties and dresses the villainous protagonist (Ian McKellen) in a Fascist's black shirt. The obtrusive ingenuity of the theatrical concept gives the whole spectacle a preening, self-infatuated quality. The play is basically a rip-roaring melodrama with a magnetic, appallingly vital bad guy; what Loncraine and McKellen give us—a thin conceit about a dull, efficient, affectless sort of monster—is a poor substitute.—T.R. (1/22/96) (Village East Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

Sabrina—Sydney Pollack's rehash of the Billy Wilder comedy runs dangerously low on style and completely short of fun. The role that Audrey Hepburn made famous goes to Julia Ormond, who doesn't strike sparks off anyone; the two Larrabee brothers, who alternately vie for Sabrina's affection, are played by Harrison Ford (as Linus the lump) and Greg Kinnear (as David the swell). If you arrive half an hour late, you'll manage to miss the early Parisian scenes, which are unspeakable.—A.L. (12/25/95-1/1/96) (Tower East and Lincoln Square.)

Screamers—A melancholy sci-fi thriller, set in 2078, that starts with an intriguing premise (selfish earthlings greedy for fuel have sold out the last remaining human pioneers on a faraway mining planet) but pretty quickly runs over a cliff. Peter Weller plays a stoic commander who tries to stop a war and bring everyone still standing back home; his main obstacles are Screamers, little killing devices originally trained to protect people but which now attempt to kill everyone in sight. The Screamers are creepy—they burrow underground like moles, and apparently they procreate—but not quite satisfying as a source of evil: you never find out how they got so clever or whether they've developed souls. With Jennifer Rubin and Andy Lauer. Adapted by Dan O'Bannon and Miguel Tejada-Flores from a story by Philip K. Dick. Directed by Christian Duguay.—S.K. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Gemini, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and National Twin.)

Sense and Sensibility—The director, Ang Lee, and the screenwriter, Emma Thompson, turn Jane Austen's first published novel into a gracious and unfailingly pleasant entertainment. Thompson also plays the very sensible heroine, Elinor Dashwood, and carries the movie without overwhelming her fellow-actors. (Alan Rickman and Kate Winslet are especially good; the only clinker is a grotesquely mannered performance by Hugh Grant as Elinor's suitor.) If the picture pressed its temperate charms on us any harder, they would be much easier to resist.—T.R. (12/18/95) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Coronet, and Lincoln Square.)

Things to Do in Denver When You're Dead—A retired gangster (Andy Garcia) rounds up his old cohorts (William Forsythe, Christopher Lloyd, Treat Williams, and Bill Nunn) for one final job. With Christopher Walken and Steve Buscemi. Written by Scott Rosenberg; directed by Gary Fleder. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Square.)

Toy Story—A team effort by the computer-animation company Pixar and Disney. The easy-to-follow screenplay, about the rivalry between two toys—cowboy Woody and spaceman Buzz Lightyear—should excite young children; teen-agers and parents can enjoy the brilliantly executed action sequences. The filmmakers have gotten around the coldness of so much computer animation by using the warm and friendly voices of Tom Hanks and Tim Allen. Yes, it's a come-on for Disney products, but all their children's films are about marketing; at least this one—unlike "Pocahontas"—has some zip.—B.D. (23rd St. West Triplex, Guild, and Lincoln Square.)

12 Monkeys—Terry Gilliam's elaborate time-travel thriller is based on Chris Marker's elegant twenty-nine-minute short, "La Jetée" (1964). Turning that perfect, rigorously constructed fable about memory and mortality into a big-budget futuristic action picture is an inherently quixotic project, but the screenwriters, David and Janet Peoples, do a surprisingly skillful job. Unfortunately, instead of respecting the reflective nature of the material, Gilliam bombards us with bizarre sensation. Bruce Willis and Madeleine Stowe give alert, thoughtful performances; Brad Pitt, in a showy role as a voluble lunatic, is dreadful.—T.R. (1/22/96) (34th St. East, First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Ziegfeld, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

Waiting to Exhale—Pure tripe. In the film version of Terry McMillan's best-selling novel, four friends (Whitney Houston, Angela Bassett, Loretta Devine, and Lela Rochon) spend their lives in bonding and mutual counselling; their approach to men swivels between sharklike aggression and Bambi-eyed yearning. The director, Forest Whitaker, appears to be at the mercy of this confusion, switching tones in the middle of scenes and drawing cartoon reactions from his performers. The soundtrack is everything the picture isn't: sultry, creamy, and quick about its business.—A.L. (1/15/96) (Sutton, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Waverly, 23rd St. West Triplex, Regency, and Criterion Center.)

The White Balloon—Jafar Panahi's drama follows the adventures of a seven-year-old girl (Aida Mohammadkhani) at the market in Tehran. In Persian. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

White Squall—The dramatic and visual centerpiece—a big, loud, scary storm at sea—is a tour de force of high-adventure moviemaking. The director, Ridley Scott, a wizard with a wind machine, conveys the pure, eruptive force of elemental chaos with extraordinary immediacy. Unfortunately, this grand-scale action scene, like the squall itself, seems to come out of nowhere: a freak occurrence that hits, without warning, near the end of a long, tedious, and largely uneventful voyage. The screenplay, by Todd Robinson, is based on the story of a real-life shipwreck in 1961, but, since the vessel also serves as a kind of prep school, the movie plays like standard coming-of-age fiction—"Dead Poets Society" on a boat. Until the storm strikes, you're afraid that the title refers not to a meteorological event but to the deafening sounds of middle-class teen-agers complaining about bad dads. With Jeff Bridges, Caroline Goodall, and Scott Wolf.—T.R. (2/5/96) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Sutton, 86th Street East Twin, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy 2.)

ALSO PLAYING

ACROSS THE SEA OF TIME: Lincoln Square. . . . **THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT** (reviewed in our issue of 11/20/95): Baronet. . . . **ANGELA:** Quad Cinema. . . . **BABE** (9/4/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . .

BLUTCH

BALTO: Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **DON'T BE A MENACE TO SOUTH CENTRAL WHILE DRINKING YOUR JUICE IN THE HOOD:** 23rd St. West Triplex and Embassy 4. . . . **EYE FOR AN EYE:** Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center. . . . **GEORGIA** (12/11/95): Village East Cinemas. . . . **GOLDENEYE** (11/27/95): Criterion Center. . . . **KICKING AND SCREAMING:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Village Theatre VII. . . . **LIVING IN OBLIVION:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **MIGHTY APHRODITE** (10/30/95): Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **PERSUASION** (9/25/95): Quad Cinema and Cinema 3. . . . **THE POSTMAN:** Village East Cinemas, Eastside Playhouse, and Carnegie Hall Cinemas. . . . **SEVEN:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **SHANGHAI TRIAD:** Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **TO DIE FOR:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **THE USUAL SUSPECTS** (8/14/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **VUKOVAR:** Quad Cinema. . . . **WHEN NIGHT IS FALLING:** Worldwide Cinemas

THEATRE ADDRESSES

(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

EAST SIDE

ANGELIKA FILM CENTER, 18 W. Houston St.
VILLAGE THEATRE VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
CINEMA VILLAGE, 22 E. 12th St.
VILLAGE EAST CINEMAS, Second Ave. at 12th St.
19TH STREET EAST 6, Broadway at 19th St.
MURRAY HILL CINEMAS, 160 E. 34th St.
34TH STREET SHOWPLACE, 238 E. 34th St.
34TH ST. EAST, 241 E. 34th St.
EASTSIDE PLAYHOUSE, Third Ave. at 55th St.
SUTTON 1 AND 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
GOTHAM CINEMA, Third Ave. at 58th St.
MANHATTAN TWIN, Third Ave. at 59th St.
59TH STREET EAST CINEMA, 239 E. 59th St.
BARONET AND CORONET, Third Ave. at 59th St.
CINEMA I, CINEMA II, AND CINEMA 3RD AVENUE, Third Ave. at 60th St.
FIRST & 62ND CINEMAS, 400 E. 62nd St.
GEMINI 1 AND 2, Second Ave. at 64th St.
BEEKMAN, Second Ave. at 66th St.
NEW YORK TWIN, Second Ave. at 67th St.
68TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, Third Ave. at 68th St.
TOWER EAST, Third Ave. at 71st St.
EAST 85TH STREET, First Ave. at 85th St.
PARK & 86TH STREET CINEMAS, 125 E. 86th St.
ORPHEUM VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
86TH STREET EAST TWIN, Third Ave. at 86th St.

WEST SIDE

FILM FORUM, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
WAVERLY 1 AND 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
ART GREENWICH TWIN, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
QUAD CINEMA, 34 W. 13th St.
CHELSEA CINEMAS, 260 W. 23rd St.
23RD ST. WEST TRIPLEX, 333 W. 23rd St.
GUILD, 33 W. 50th St.
WORLDWIDE CINEMAS, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
ZIEGFELD, 141 W. 54th St.
CARNEGIE HALL CINEMAS, Seventh Ave. between 56th and 57th Sts.
ANGELIKA 57, 225 W. 57th St.
PARIS, 4 W. 58th St.
CINEMA 3, 2 W. 59th St.
62ND & BROADWAY, 62 W. 62nd St.
LINCOLN PLAZA CINEMAS, Broadway at 63rd St. (757-2280).
REGENCY, Broadway at 67th St.
LINCOLN SQUARE, Broadway at 68th St.
84TH STREET SIXPLEX, Broadway at 84th St.
METRO CINEMA 1 AND 2, Broadway at 99th St.
OLYMPIA I AND II, Broadway at 107th St.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

CRITERION CENTER, Broadway at 44th St.
EMBASSY 1, Broadway at 46th St.
EMBASSY 2, 3, AND 4, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
ASTOR PLAZA, 44th St. at Broadway.
NATIONAL TWIN, Broadway at 44th St.

REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Michael Sragow. Theatre addresses and phone numbers appear with the listings following these notes.)

THE BLACK PIRATE (1926)—Douglas Fairbanks, Sr., in an exhilarating, lighthearted swashbuckler, filmed in a soft, golden, early Technicolor process. This is the film with the memorable sequence of the hero sliding down a sail on a knife, and it's probably the Fairbanks film that children like best. Billie Dove is the beautiful leading lady, Sam de Grasse is the sour, sneering villain, and Donald Crisp plays an aged, good-hearted pirate who scratches himself a lot. Albert Parker directed. Silent—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Feb. 9-10.)

ELEVATOR TO THE GALLOWS (1957)—Louis Malle's first film—a thriller about an attempt at a perfect crime, made in a tense yet velvety style. Jeanne Moreau, who was to become famous the next year in Malle's second film, "The Lovers," is less expansive here; her sullen, sensual mask is just right for this limited but absorbing *policier*, set to Miles Davis's music. The film has an unusual sense of control and style, considering that the plot itself is third-rate; the black-and-white cinematography is by Henri Decaë. With Maurice Ronet, Lino Ventura, and Georges Poujouly. In French.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Feb. 13.)

THE IRON MASK (1929)—Douglas Fairbanks stars as D'Artagnan in an unabashedly emotional adaptation of Alexandre Dumas's final saga of the Three Musketeers—the one about Louis XIV's secretly jailed twin brother. Unlike later adapters of the tale, Fairbanks and the director, Allan Dwan, emphasize the panache of the Musketeers rather than the claustrophobic horror of the prisoner in the iron mask. Their salute to camaraderie treats the motto "All for one and one for all" with fervor and humor: at night, the heroes collapse into the same quadruple bed. Ultimately the movie's sentiment-filled swashbuckling achieves a cornball grandeur. As the spirits of Athos, Porthos, and Aramis welcome D'Artagnan into heaven, the final title reads "The Beginning"—but it was Fairbanks' last silent film and the glorious end of his reign as Hollywood's most gallant action hero. The picture was released with a spoken prologue and recorded music and sound effects.—M.S. (Film Forum 2; Feb. 11-12.)

LACOMBE, LUCIEN (1974)—About a boy who has an empty space where feelings beyond the purely instinctual are expected to be. The time is 1944, and the boy—a French peasant—goes to work each day hunting down and torturing people for the Gestapo. The director, Louis Malle, casts as Lucien a teen-age country boy (Pierre Blaise) who can respond to events with his own innocence, apathy, and animal shrewdness. Malle's gamble is that the cameras will discover what the artist's imagination can't, and, steadily, startlingly, the gamble pays off. Without ever mentioning the subject of innocence and guilt, this extraordinary film, in its calm, dispassionate way, addresses it on a very deep level. With Aurore Clément as a Parisian Jewish girl; Holger Löwenadler as her punctilious, cultivated father; Thérèse Giehse as her grandmother; Gilberte Rivet as the boy's mother; Stephane Bouy; and Jacques Rispal. The script is by Malle and Patrick Modiano. In French.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Feb. 10 and 12.)

LATE RUNS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

FILM FORUM 2, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Films starring Douglas Fairbanks, Sr.; most are silent. Feb. 7: "Mr. Robinson Crusoe" (1932, Edward Sutherland) and "Around the World in Eighty Minutes" (1931, Victor Fleming). . . . Feb. 8: "In Again, Out Again" (1917, John Emerson), "The Matrimaniac" (1916, Paul Powell), and "The Lamb" (1915, Christy Cabanne). . . . Feb. 9-10: "The Black Pirate" (†) and "The Mollycoddle" (1920, Fleming). . . . Feb. 11-12: "The Three Musketeers" (1921, Fred Niblo) and "The Iron Mask" (†). . . . Feb. 13: "Wild and Woolly" (1917, Emerson), "The Half Breed" (1916, Allan Dwan), and "Reggie Mixes In" (1916, Cabanne).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Feb. 8 at 3 and 6: "The Man Who Drew Bug Eyed Monsters" (1995, Mel Bucklin and Bill Chvala), a documentary. . . . ¶ Feb. 9 at 2:30: "Story of a Love Story" (1973, John Frankenheimer). . . . ¶ From Feb. 9: Films by and about animator Friz Freleng. . . . ¶ Feb. 9-11: Silent films starring Asta Nielsen. With non-English intertitles and live English voice-overs. . . . ¶ Films by Louis Malle. Feb. 10 at 6 and Feb. 12 at 2:30: "Lacombe, Lucien" (†). . . . Feb. 11 at 6 and Feb. 13 at 2:30: "Murmur of the Heart" (1971; in French), with Léa Massari, Benoit Ferreux, and Daniel Gélin. . . . Feb. 13 at 6: "Elevator to the Gallows" (†).

WALTER READE THEATRE, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level (875-5600)—Polish cinema, from 1930 to the present; all films in Polish, with English subtitles. Feb. 7 at 2 and 6:15: "Everything for Sale" (1969, Andrzej Wajda), with Daniel Olbrychski and Andrzej Lapicki. . . . Feb. 7 at 4 and 8:30: "Landscape After Battle" (1970, Wajda). . . . Feb. 8 at 2 and 6:15: "Damned Roads" (1959, Czeslaw Petelski). . . . Feb. 8 at 4:10 and 8:30: "The Birth Certificate" (1960, Stanislaw Rozewicz). . . . Feb. 10 at 4, 8:15, and 10, and Feb. 12 at 8:45: "Knife in the Water" (1962, Roman Polanski). . . . Feb. 10 at 6 and Feb. 11 at 6:30: "Bad Luck" (1969, Andrzej Munk), with Bogumil Kobiela. . . . Feb. 12 at 2 and 6: "How to Be Loved" (1965, Wojciech Has). . . . Feb. 12 at 4 and 8: "Identification Marks: None" (1965; Jerzy Skolimowski), with Skolimowski and Elzbieta Czyewska. . . . Feb. 13 at 2: "Man of Marble" (1977, Wajda), with Krystyna Janda and Jerzy Radzilowicz. . . . ¶ Feb. 9 at 8 and Feb. 11 at 4: Highlights from the career of Stanley Donen, selected by the director, who will be present. . . . ¶ Weekend showings for children. Feb. 10 at 2: "The Creature from the Black Lagoon" (1954, Jack Arnold), with Richard Carlson, Julia Adams, and Richard Denning.

A DIFFERENT LIGHT BOOKSTORE, 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850)—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On Feb. 11 at 7, the feature will be "Friday Foster" (1975, Arthur Marks), with Pam Grier, Yaphet Kotto, Godfrey Cambridge, Eartha Kitt, Jim Backus, Scatman Crothers, Ted Lange, and Carl Weathers.

WHITNEY MUSEUM, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—Films by Robert Frank. Feb. 7 at 4, Feb. 8 at 6:15, and Feb. 9-11 at 4: "Date d'Échéance" (1986, Marc Paulin), "Pull My Daisy" (1959), and "Last Supper" (1992).

SYMPHONY SPACE, Broadway at 95th St. (864-5400)—Feb. 13 at 7: "Casablanca" (1942, Michael Curtiz), with Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman, Claude Rains, Paul Henreid, Conrad Veidt, Sydney Greenstreet, and Peter Lorre. . . . Feb. 13 at 9: "La Ronde" (1950, Max Ophuls; in French), with Gérard Philipe, Danielle Darrieux, Simone Signoret, and Jean-Louis Barrault.

FLORENCE GOULD HALL, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Feb. 13 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Eyes Without a Face" (1959, Georges Franju; in French), with Pierre Brasseur, Alida Valli, and Edith Scob.

MUSEUM OF TELEVISION AND RADIO, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—James Dean's television appearances. Through Feb. 11: "I'm a Fool" (1954) and "The Thief" (1955). . . . ¶ Television work by John Frankenheimer. Through Feb. 11: "Knife in the Dark" (1954) and "Old Man" (1958).

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (1-718 784-0077)—Feb. 10-11 at 2 and 4:30: Four different programs of shorts from the Prelinger Archives of educational, industrial, advertising, and amateur films.

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

QUITTING THE MEDIAOCRACY

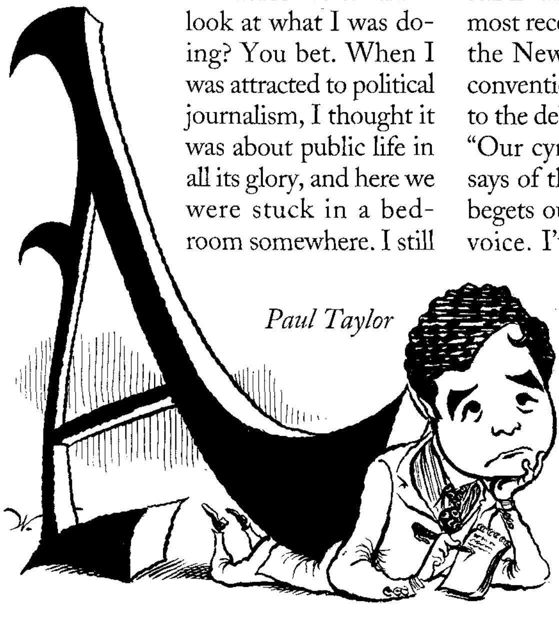
WHEN it comes to living down marital notoriety, Hester Prynne has nothing on the Washington *Post* reporter Paul Taylor. Ever since the 1988 Presidential race, Taylor has been symbolically tattooed with a giant "A" for having the audacity to ask Gary Hart whether he had ever committed adultery. For better or worse, what came to be called the Big-A Question forever changed the rules on public discussion of private philandering. The question also changed history, leading inexorably to Hart's withdrawal from the Presidential race and prompting a huge and wildly divided outpouring of views. Betty Friedan exulted, perhaps overconfidently, "This is the last time a candidate will be able to treat women as bimbos," while one Hart supporter excoriated Taylor for making Hart "the first American victim of Islamic justice—he has been politically stoned to death for adultery."

Taylor argued at the time, and in a book he wrote shortly after the campaign, called "See How They Run: Electing the President in an Age of Mediaocracy," that neither he nor the *Post* could be faulted for having asked Hart "the question he asked for." Indeed, by 1992, with the omnipresent coverage of Bill Clinton's romantic accuser Gennifer Flowers, Taylor's definition of what was politically pertinent seemed to have prevailed. Yet Taylor has since been so overwhelmed with misgivings about the way he and others have practiced political journalism in this country that now, with the first Presidential primaries of 1996 only weeks away, and with the expectation that he would assume the coveted job of campaign reporter for the *Post*, he has decided to quit the profession, exchanging his press pass for a hair shirt.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MICHAEL WITTE

What makes Taylor's midlife crisis particularly unusual is his choice of a new career. He wants to become a self-styled "journalism reformer." He has persuaded the Pew Charitable Trusts to fund him for six months while he tries to convince the commercial TV networks that they should give free airtime to Presidential candidates, in order to get their message to the voters directly—unmediated by journalists. "The press desperately needs to take itself out of the process," he says. "The politicians' sound bites have been getting smaller and smaller, and the yapping of the press has been getting louder and longer."

A thoughtful, somewhat brooding forty-six-year-old who years ago was entranced by the example of Theodore White, Taylor says of his disillusionment, "It started in '88—the Hart thing. I spent the rest of the campaign saying I'd done the right thing. But did the whole situation force me to take a look at what I was doing? You bet. When I was attracted to political journalism, I thought it was about public life in all its glory, and here we were stuck in a bedroom somewhere. I still think that the journalistic logic of the situation compelled that question, but eight or nine years later I feel that we don't want to get to that place."

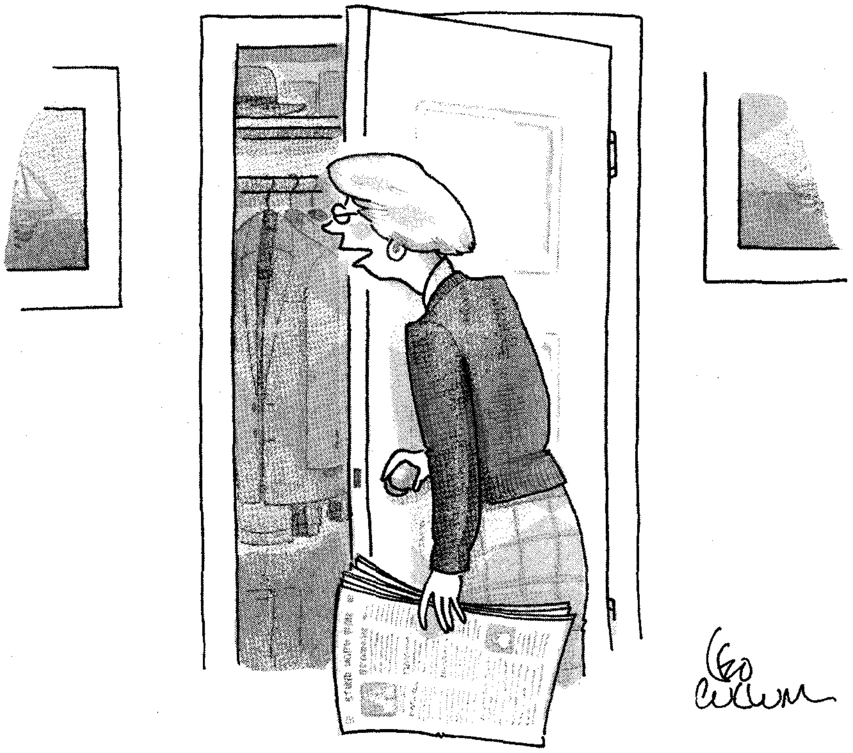


Paul Taylor

TAYLOR'S concerns were magnified by a three-year tour as the *Post's* correspondent in South Africa, during which the first national elections since the end of apartheid were held. "I happened to cover a society at a big turn, with figures that rose to the occasion," he says. "They exerted moral leadership and brought frightened people across a great divide. They saw the possibilities of the human spirit." In contrast to the cynicism and trivialization that characterized the elections at home, he was struck by the grandeur of democracy in "a culture of belief."

So when the *Post* asked him to cover this year's campaign cycle, Taylor admits, "I felt myself going down a slope I didn't want to go down." A teaching stint at Princeton, during which he steeped himself in critiques of journalism, including, most recently, James Fallows's "Breaking the News," convinced him that much conventional reporting was contributing to the debasement of politics in America. "Our cynicism begets their fakery," he says of the candidates, "and their fakery begets our cynicism. I know the cynical voice. I've grown up in newsrooms. I know it and I don't like it." The only way out, he decided finally, was to bolt.

Any satisfaction in the best and the brashest's bailing out comes a bit late for those in the Hart campaign. Hart, travelling in Europe, declined to comment. But a former aide, William Bradley, recalls that when Taylor told him



"You can come out now. The Beatles are gone again."

• •

over breakfast that he had developed some misgivings about his role in the '88 campaign, "he was very likable, but, to tell you the truth, I wanted to jump across the table at him."

KAVINDICATION

LONGTIME readers of these pages may harbor some curiosity about the fate of Jan Kavan, the veteran Czech oppositionist-in-exile who returned to a hero's welcome in Prague following the Velvet Revolution of 1989, was easily elected to parliament, and a few months later was denounced as a secret operative of the Communist security services. (See "The Velvet Purge," October 19, 1992.) Kavan steadfastly protested his innocence: of course his name showed up in the security files, he said, but as a target, not as a collaborator. Still, he seemed to founder in the vicious political infighting that came to characterize the ensuing so-called "lustration" campaign.

Many compared his situation to that of Kafka's Josef K.; others compared it to that of his own father, an idealistic Jewish Communist whose career had been destroyed during the Stalinist witch-hunts of the early fifties—a harrowing experience that led to his death, of a heart attack, at the age of forty-five, when Jan was only thirteen years old. (It was in part to avenge his father's death, Kavan has always insisted, that he joined the antitotalitarian student campaigns that led up to the Prague Spring of 1968. After the movement was suppressed by the Soviets, he continued his activism clandestinely in Britain for more than twenty years.)

Finally, last month, after a five-year struggle of byzantine bureaucratic complexity, Kavan managed to clear his name. Reporting by telephone from Prague, he said, "Actually, I thought I'd succeeded in clearing my name back in September of 1994. In effect, I sued the Interior Ministry, saying that it should either put up or shut up: provide concrete evidence concerning my supposed collaboration or withdraw the accusation. The district court ruled decisively that there was no evidence whatsoever that I'd ever consciously collaborated with, passed information to, or fulfilled tasks assigned to me by the Communist security apparatus. I was ecstatic—but then the Interior Ministry almost immediately appealed the decision, implying the existence of further incriminating documents. For another year, I was subjected to an incredibly scurrilous campaign of media leaks and libels. The Interior Ministry managed to get a continuance on the case last November, but, finally, on January 16th the appeals court declared that the ministry had utterly failed to find any new evidence and thereby completely reaffirmed the lower court's vindication of my name and forbade the Interior Ministry to make any more appeals."

The news is good for Kavan, and even more so in that his wife just gave birth to their second daughter. "All along," he says, "I was pursuing this vindication with such headlong intensity for my children's sake even more than my own, so that they wouldn't have to go through the kind of shame I had to endure as a child." Meanwhile, however, Kavan's health has been ravaged: he has suffered three heart attacks since his return to Czechoslovakia and underwent a severe bout of angina this past summer. Nonetheless, he intends to stand for parliament in the coming elections as a candidate of the country's principal oppositionist party.

MY TONY VALENTINE

IT is extremely tempting but not advisable to surprise someone you love with a two-and-a-half-million-dollar diamond necklace from Harry Winston for Valentine's Day. Seriously, don't do it. If you're going to get a small thing—fifteen thousand, but still very, very pretty—it's O.K. to be sneaky, but when you're getting someone an important piece you should at least let her try it on for size. This advice comes free from Ambaji Shinde, the head designer at Harry Winston. Shinde has been the head designer for thirty-three years, so he knows these things.

Five of Shinde's major necklaces that you shouldn't surprise someone with on Valentine's Day were being built in the Winston workshop the other day. The workshop is in the Winston store, on Fifth Avenue. On the store's mezzanine is Shinde's studio, which has framed sketches of his necklaces hanging on the wall. Shinde, who is seventy-eight years old, is trim, neat, and so demure that he can say things like "hundred-carat cabochon emerald" without making you faint.

"Sometimes I picture who might end up buying a certain necklace while I'm designing it," he was saying. He doodled on a notepad: a choker, made of pea-size stones. Who does he imagine might receive this as a surprise gift, even though she shouldn't? "Oh, maybe the wife of an Arab guy," he said. "Not a Frenchwoman. They like things that are more feminine, more emotional." A V-shaped emerald-and-diamond tiara? He pictures it on the wife of an American industrialist. The little half-million-dollar things get put together in no time, but the big ones take at least four or five months. Then they are displayed in the store, and sometimes just the right shopper with just the right couple of million drops in, and the necklace is sold and gone within a week. Happy Valentine's Day, Mrs. Industrialist. Shinde is delighted to see one of his pieces go. "That's my pleasure," he said. "Someone likes it, someone takes it home."

PHAT RAP

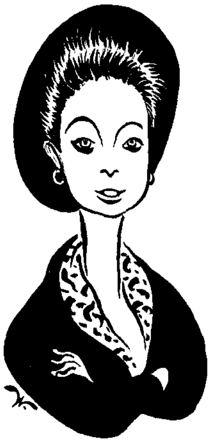
FOR the hip-hop aristocracy, it's not enough to push a fly ride (drive a great car), sport butter gear (wear sharp clothes), and politick in the hot spots (hang out in the right places). Up-to-the-minute New York cool demands a phat (awesome) outgoing answering-machine message. And the key to a flavor (hip) message is never, ever to employ your own voice. Using your children is dead (passé), and only certain people can still get away with using music to lead callers to the beep. To be a true Big Willie (important person), you need to have your outgoing message personally recorded for you by a friend who just happens to be a star.

Dial a certain sister in Bay Ridge who is tight with Method Man, and the tough but sensual rapper, who's melting all the caramel sundaes, butter pecans, and chocolate de-luxes (light-, medium-, and dark-skinned black women), can be heard saying, in a slightly annoyed voice, "Yo, who's this calling my wife? She's not home, call back . . . ."

Hit up Fab Five Freddie, the former host of "Yo! MTV Raps," and a laid-back rapper answers, "Check it out, check it out. It's the Notorious B.I.G., a.k.a. Biggie Smalls. My man Fab ain't in the crib right now, probably chasin' the honeys, gettin' the money, you know how real players do it. . . ." Others in the outgoing-chic élite boast messages by Flavor-Flav, Isaac Hayes, and the old-school rap giant Doug E. Fresh. Of course, if your outgoing message is nervous (not good), then chances are no one will know, because you'll be at home, ready to pick up the phone, while everyone else is at some party that's off the hook (incredible).

FAR FROM THE MADISON CROWD

"FOOD," says Renée Gerson, a woman given to startling aphorisms, "is either French, Biblical, or filled with chocolate ingredients to make it very sensual." When Renée says "sensual," she doesn't hold back; she gives you an intoxicating smile. And you want to smile back, and lightly touch Renée's arm, and ask for the *tartufo affogato*—a chocolate cream made in Italy, flown across the ocean, and then drowned in hot espresso by Renée herself while she stands at the polished-mahogany bar of Espresso Madison, a pocket-size espresso place on the Upper East Side that she owns and orchestrates. And you want to smile at the beautiful Italian lady next to you in the deep-pile fur, and also at the guy in spattered painter's pants who's come in for a sandwich, and at the mom who's bumming a Marlboro from behind the counter.



Renée Gerson

Renée is a woman *d'un certain âge* in whom much converges. By background, she is Russian, by birth Brazilian, by upbringing Italian, and by choice American, though she is also a devout Francophile. Renée's favorite word is "refinement," a term that in her private lexicon combines French elegance, Italian charm, and American democracy, and encompasses the simplicity and purity that Renée means to conjure up with the word "Biblical."

Espresso Madison is the physical realization of this rarefied ideal. "I wanted something exactly like what we find on every street corner in Italy," says the proprietress, sitting in the window seat built for two. "Something that is modest enough for every worker to want to walk in, and yet whoever has the ability to recognize refinement will see a more refined side to it." A spray of roses always sits on a counter, reflected in a mirrored wall; champagne and white wine rest in an ice bucket on the gleaming bar; sandwiches and Swiss chocolates are arrayed in racks. In the mornings, Renée puts out on the bar a sort of paint can full of hazelnut cream to be drizzled over the croissants—like a *pain au chocolat* but "more glamorous, more personal." The cappuccino is irreproachable. The sandwiches are Biblical yet refined. "A mozzarella sandwich is like a great pasta," Renée says. "You have to feel the flavor of your bread, the flavor of the mozzarella—you don't dress it with *vinaigrette*." Renée pronounces this last word with Olympian disdain; the way she says "mozzarella," on the other hand, feels like the drizzling of hazelnut cream on a croissant, the drenching of a *tartufo* with hot espresso.

"I *do* have rather good taste," Renée says, as if taking herself by surprise, "but in a way that is not only your personal taste but comes from your education, your background." Renée was raised to be a porcelain doll. At age five, she was sent off to a boarding school in Lugano. And there was the grand villa in Milan, and the suite in the Bristol with the cage elevator running from the bedroom to the living room, downstairs, and the Splendido in Portofino. It sounds like Eloise, but it was more like Hansel and Gretel. "I had a severely abused childhood," Renée says, glancing up and smiling as a customer walks in. "If you weren't being physically hurt, it was an achievement." It took many years to learn not to despise the luxury that had been dipped in poison.

And so, in the elegant and cruel latitudes of Madison Avenue, Renée offers elegance and kindness—elegance as a form of kindness. One of her principles of refinement is "You treat everyone the same." This means, in practice, that Renée talks to every last patron, including timid people, American people, unfashionable people. These people, in turn, find themselves talking to one another, and then exclaiming about it. Even the French act *gentil.* And Renée, an Hermès scarf thrown over her shoulders just so, plays the medium. ♦

"Quitting the Mediaocracy," Jane Mayer; "Kavindication," Lawrence Weschler; "My Tony Valentine," Susan Orlean; "Phat Rap," Touré; "Far from the Madison Crowd," James Traub.

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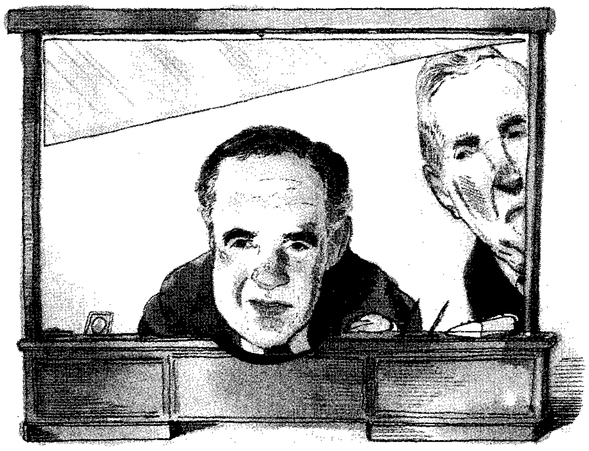
ANNALS OF COMMUNICATIONS

THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

These are giddy days in the industry, and C.E.O.s keep losing their heads.

BY KEN AULETTA

On the afternoon of Tuesday, January 16th, Frank Biondi's secretary told him that Sumner Redstone, Viacom's chairman, wanted to see him at three-thirty the next day. This was an unusual request, since Redstone often popped unannounced into Biondi's office, which was just a few steps away from his own. "I knew then that something was going on," Biondi, who at the time was Viacom's president and chief executive officer, says.



Viacom boomed under Frank Biondi's leadership—so why did Sumner Redstone terminate him?

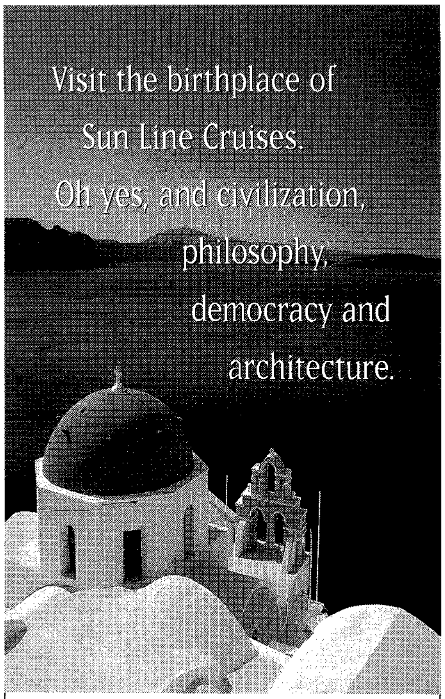
BARRY BLITT

Redstone, who is seventy-two years old, recalls being extremely nervous as he entered and said, "Frank, there isn't any easy way of saying this, but I've reached the conclusion that our business relationship should be terminated. I just came to the conclusion that your vision and mine as to how the company should be led are incompatible." With that, Redstone did what Biondi had done when *he* fired Richard Snyder, the publisher of Simon & Schuster, in June of 1994: he handed the victim a draft press release announcing his dismissal.

Although Biondi was on the board of Viacom, he did not know that Redstone had conducted a secret board meeting that morning at the law offices of Shearman & Sterling. Nor did he know that since Christmas Redstone had been discussing firing Biondi with two executive vice-presidents, Philippe Dauman and Tom Dooley, and the company's outside communications counsel, Ken Lerer. Biondi had been at Viacom for nine years, and Redstone had credited him with building it into the fourth-largest entertainment company in the world, behind Time Warner, Disney, and Bertelsmann. But some tension had crept into their relationship in the last few years. As Biondi says, "the dynamics" between them had shifted slightly in 1993, when Redstone selected Dauman, his longtime counsel, to succeed him as chairman eventually. He knew that Redstone had been upset when Nickelodeon's president, Geraldine Laybourne, announced last December that she had been lured away by Disney, to become the president of Disney/ABC Cable Networks. Redstone hated losing her, and Biondi's cool detachment about the loss had annoyed him. Still, Biondi could not imagine that Laybourne had told them both that Viacom could not match the broader opportunity that Disney was offering.

Biondi also knew that it annoyed the work-obsessed Redstone whenever he left at 6 P.M. or so for the gym or a game of tennis, and when he took regular vacations. Dauman and Dooley and others would often go to dinner with Redstone, but Biondi felt secure enough to believe that he didn't need to schmooze with the boss, and didn't need to work all the time. He believed that he and Redstone were a good fit: the disciplined manager and the brash entrepreneur.

On January 17th, as Biondi sat across from Redstone, he only glanced at the seven-page draft press release, then re-



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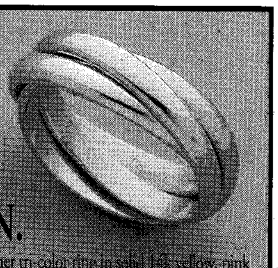

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sponded in a typically subdued fashion. He recalls saying, "That's a surprise. Why?"

"You should know," Redstone said.

"I don't," Biondi said.

"Talk to Tom. He should know," Redstone said, referring to Dooley.

Biondi said that he hadn't been able to find Dooley all day and had been told he was out of the office. Redstone insisted that he was there, and Biondi replied that he was not. "I'll go find him," Redstone said, and he then left and did not return. From four-thirty until midnight, Redstone recalls, he was on the telephone, trying to lessen the shock for dozens of people. One of the first calls he made was to Gordon Crawford, a senior vice-president at Capital Research Company. Capital's clients own eight per cent of Viacom's stock.

As for Biondi, he phoned his wife, Carol. "I have good news and bad news," he remembers saying.

"What's the bad news?" Carol Biondi asked.

"We're not going to China," he said, referring to a trip that was to have been part business and part pleasure. "The good news is that I'm going to be able to try some new things, because I'm going to be leaving. Sumner just walked in and said he wants to take my job."

FRANK BIONDI is merely the latest in a lengthening line of entertainment and communications executives who have been forced out in recent months or years: Warner Music's chairman, Robert Morgado, last May, and his successor, HBO's chairman, Michael Fuchs, last November; the Disney Studios' chief, Jeffrey Katzenberg, in September of 1994; the Sony Corporation's American president, Michael Schulhof, in December of last year, and the Sony studio head, Peter Guber, in September of 1994; Simon & Schuster's Snyder in June of 1994; and the Paramount Communications president, Stanley Jaffe, earlier in 1994. Recent forced resignations include those of CNBC's president, Roger Ailes, who left in January of this year; Hearst Magazines' chief, Claeys Bahrenburg, who stepped down last November; and Fox's Barry Diller, who left the company in 1992. Biondi, like most of the others, was by objective measures a success. (Schulhof and Guber, whose financial performance was dismal, were the exceptions.)

Under Biondi's leadership, Viacom had grown from a billion-dollar company to a nearly twelve-billion-dollar colossus. He had created a strong management team and had smoothly brought both Paramount and Blockbuster into the Viacom tent. Earnings were slightly lower than analysts anticipated in 1995, but Viacom's operating cash flow (before interest, taxes, and depreciation) was two billion three hundred million dollars, up five hundred million from the previous year. Last year was "the best year any entertainment company had on the numbers," Biondi says. "We were up twenty-five per cent." He predicts that the company, including Blockbuster, will continue to enjoy double-digit rates of growth.

Morgado could claim a similar success. When he took over Warner Music, in 1985, the company's revenues were just under a billion dollars. At the end of 1994, five months before he was dismissed, he was presiding over a four-billion-dollar global-music division that generated seven hundred and twenty million dollars in cash flow for Time Warner. Yet Gerald Levin, Time Warner's chairman and C.E.O., told his board that Morgado had to go, because he had alienated many of the company's music executives. Michael Fuchs had overseen the growth of HBO, which went from six hundred thousand subscribers in 1976 to thirty million by 1995. A few months after Fuchs was promoted to manage the music division as well, Levin told the Time Warner board that he did not march in step with management. Barry Diller was the chief architect behind the successful building of the Fox network, in 1986. Jeffrey Katzenberg played a major part in the resurgence of the Disney Studios. Richard Snyder transformed a sleepy publishing house into a giant. In just a little more than two years, Roger Ailes helped transform CNBC from a startup cable network that lost money into one that produced operating profits of some fifty million dollars last year.

The reason Biondi was let go was not that he wasn't a team player, as was said of Richard Snyder. He was not accused of disloyalty, as Fuchs was, or of an inability to get along with some underlings, as Morgado was. No one believed that Biondi had pushed too hard to be promoted, as was said of Katzenberg, or that he was hapless, as was said of Schulhof. Biondi was fired for other reasons. "Frank is not an aggressive person," Redstone says. "He is not a person who seizes the day. That doesn't mean he's not a good manager." It just means, Redstone told me, that his skills were not appropriate for what the chairman calls "the new Viacom"—a company that has to analyze less and act more quickly than it did in the past. While expressing respect for Biondi's talents and integrity, Redstone criticized him for lacking passion. "I think passion is important," Redstone said. "My passion is rationally based. It plays a role in leadership—to be able to instill excitement."

Yet common themes can be found in the firings of Biondi and many of his brethren, and they may have to do less with job performance than with the nature of the entertainment business (and human nature). The business has changed because of its "awesome and escalating concentration of power," Redstone says. And Levin, who in the past year fired Morgado and then Fuchs, says, "We're not in the furniture business. We're an idiosyncratic, ego-driven business. To spend two years turning out an album is idiosyncratic. The management of this business does not lend itself to traditional management practices."

Biondi, too, believes that the entertainment industry, where decisions are often made by people who operate on instincts and hunches, is unlike any other. "If there is a single unifying element, it probably has to do with the size of the stage and the number of people on it," Biondi told me. "It is an ego thing. . . . At Coca-Cola or Ford, executives are part of the fabric. They're a team. They do things the Coca-Cola way. In communications, you don't have this tradition and history. There's high turnover. There's not a lot of feeling of permanency, partly because the business has been reinvented in the last fifteen years. Ted Turner was running a TV station in Atlanta fifteen years ago."

Howard Stringer, who was formerly the president of the CBS Broadcast Group and is now the chairman and C.E.O. of Tele-TV, an effort by a consortium of telephone companies to provide TV programming, believes that the "fabric" in entertainment and communications has been replaced—in part, at least—by the will to power. "We are now entering the Napoleonic period of the entertainment business," Stringer says. "Everyone wants to be Napoleon—'I'm in charge.' Everyone wants to be perceived as uniquely powerful." Biondi, too, believes that, just as a company tries to promote its brand name, its C.E.O. tries to associate his or her own name with a brand. "You're seeing the emergence of the quasi-owner executive," he says. "Someone like Michael Eisner, much to his credit, became the embodiment of Disney."

Redstone, however, shrugs off the idea that ego plays a role. "I have passed the stage where I have to bolster my ego with news stories," he told me, adding, "I am not a stargazer." As he said this, I studied the photographs that line his office wall. They are all of celebrities of another era: Jerry Lewis, Gregory Peck, Jimmy Stewart. And Edmund Muskie.

Disney's Geraldine Laybourne, who may be the most powerful woman in the television industry, says she never saw any sign of a Redstone ego. "Sumner never had trouble with me getting publicity, or with [the Paramount studio chief] Sherry Lansing or [the MTV chairman] Tom Freston getting publicity." Yet there is some evidence that Viacom's public-relations department sought to be sure that Redstone received at least equal time with Biondi in all future articles; when the magazine *Wired* planned to put a photograph of Biondi on its cover, according to a top editor there, "the flacks at Viacom" insisted that Redstone be included. Viacom's spokesman, Carl Folta, says, "Sumner Redstone knew nothing about this. It was our decision." It is clear that the attention paid to other mergers rankles Redstone. "People forget—they're caught up with Disney and ABC or Time Warner and Turner, and they forget how much Viacom has changed," he told me. It is also hard to miss Redstone's own changed appearance. In recent months, he has replaced the rather casual look he favored with a new, coiffed hair style.

Geraldine Laybourne suggests that gender, too, may play a role in all the industry shifts. "I think men measure their achievements—and this is a gross generalization—by who's on top," she says. "You see a phenomenon like 'O.K., Rupert bought this. What am I going to buy?' Women measure their success differently. . . . I don't get my good inner feelings by beating someone out. I think men are raised to be more competitive. It's not

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that women can't compete; it's just that we compete in different ways."

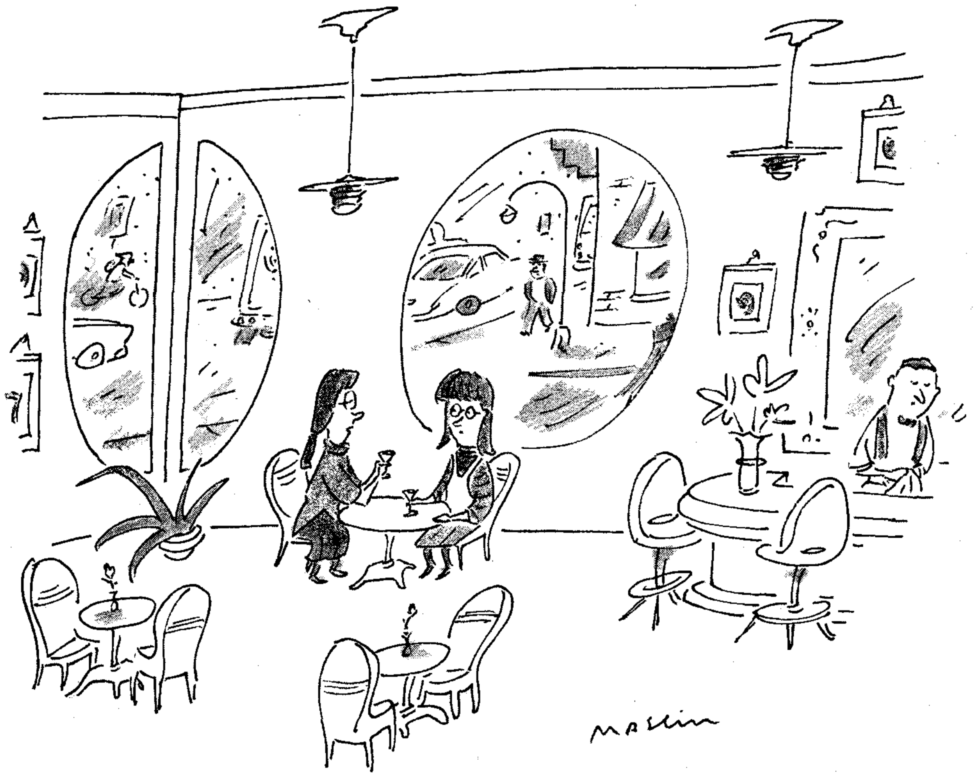
Gerald Levin believes that the speed of changes in technology, the publicity, and the nervousness of Wall Street all have conspired to create a new climate for the executive at the top, and make the executive more anxious to find associates who can make him feel comfortable. "In every case, it's a question of performance, if you define performance broadly enough," Levin says. "Performance can mean psychological tension. It can be like a marriage where people grow out of each other. Many of these conflicts involve a C.E.O.'s comfort level. It's not always black-and-white when someone should be fired. It's judgmental. The most important thing is the feeling of a relationship. Words like 'family' and 'marriage' are important. In doing deals, you need trust, or they come apart. Wall Street often misses the point of throbbing emotionalism. Anytime someone makes a logical business decision, go look at the emotions underneath."

This response surprised Robert Morgado, in the light of his firing by Levin last year. Since that happened, Morgado has used his severance pay, of roughly sixty million dollars, to fund Maroley Communications, a media-investment company. When I passed along Levin's thoughts, I didn't tell him whose thoughts they were. "Comfort level with what?" Morgado replied. "What is comfort? Does it mean that someone wants to be comfortable so he doesn't feel threatened?" Wasn't it reasonable to expect, say, loyalty from an underling? "I won't dispute that as part of the equation," he said. "But if it's loyalty that springs from insecurity, then it breeds bad decisions. It breeds the plumbers of Watergate. It breeds survival at all costs." And, no doubt, it bred the classic case of insecurity that drove Gulf & Western's former C.E.O., Martin Davis, to drive out the Paramount Studios executives Barry Diller and Michael Eisner in 1984, because they were featured on the cover of *New York*, and he was not.

HAS a new era of beheadings arrived? "I don't think the percentage of turnover is any higher," the investment banker Herbert A. Allen says. "What's new is the intense publicity." Redstone, who since Biondi's dismissal has added the title of C.E.O. to his letterhead, thinks that the new nature of the communications business inevitably speeds the turnover rate. "There are diverse themes within the various companies," Redstone told me. "But there is probably a general, common theme, and that is, with . . . companies becoming bigger and bigger, with their operations becoming more and more diverse and more and more complex, and with the world in which they live becoming more and more complex, the issue arises in the minds of those who control these companies. Are the managers they have chosen equipped to face the challenges that are arising?"

Wall Street and the press also have altered the landscape. "I think we've compressed the period of time when things occur," Levin says. "Consolidation has brought more competition. And there always needs to be a next step. Most of these companies are financed through the stock market. They grow through the support of the market, and it's a much more unforgiving market. The press can bring someone down now, because perceptions are more important. They can affect the way a board feels or the way investors feel."

Even so, the entertainment business could not survive without risk—and risks hinge on hunches, not certitudes. Levin invested millions in a video-on-demand experiment in Orlando, Florida, maintaining that it would become the next rage. It didn't. The Internet did. Redstone complained that Biondi let Paramount make movies from screenplays that both he and Biondi didn't like, yet Redstone admits that he "loved" the studio's fifty-five-million-dollar Christmas offering, "Sabrina," which was a box-office dud. In the end, C.E.O.s struggle to guess right: should they invest in direct-broadcast satellite or cable, long-distance or video services? Interactivity? High-definition TV or more channels? A studio or computer software? Biondi, who worked at HBO and at Columbia before joining Viacom, says that what has changed is the level of uncertainty: "Much more of a sense that 'I've got to do something.' There wasn't this sense in the eighties." And scared successful companies often act scared. In terms of growth and profitability, "these are not industries that are threatened," Jorge Reina Schement, professor of communications and information policy at Rutgers and Penn State, observes. "More fundamentally, these industries don't know where they're



"I'm desperately in need of a new husband—my body rejected the last one."

going, so there is a tendency to change people."

A source of their terror is the more pronounced role played by Wall Street. That's an audience that A.T. & T. was playing to when it announced the layoffs of forty thousand employees. That's what Redstone revealed by his quick call to Viacom's heavy stockholder Gordon Crawford, among others. And it is why C.E.O.s spend much more time today than they did ten years ago making presentations to major institutional investors, or courting Wall Street analysts as if they were political delegates. Levin knows that if he doesn't get the price of Time Warner stock to rise—a price that has stalled despite two bull markets in six years—he may not be able to finance the expansion he wants, and then he could be ousted. That creates insecurity, but it also encourages a tendency to treat the market as a more intelligent institution than it is. Reinforcing this short-term preoccupation, CNN now frequently billboards an account of stock-market "Winners and Losers." Viacom is said to be a loser, because Blockbuster dipped for a couple of months and is now threatened by video-on-demand. Video stores may one day be threatened by electronic delivery of movies, but that bleak threat is not an imminent one. Over the next four years, Blockbuster expects to triple its stores overseas, from thirteen hundred and thirty-three to four thousand.

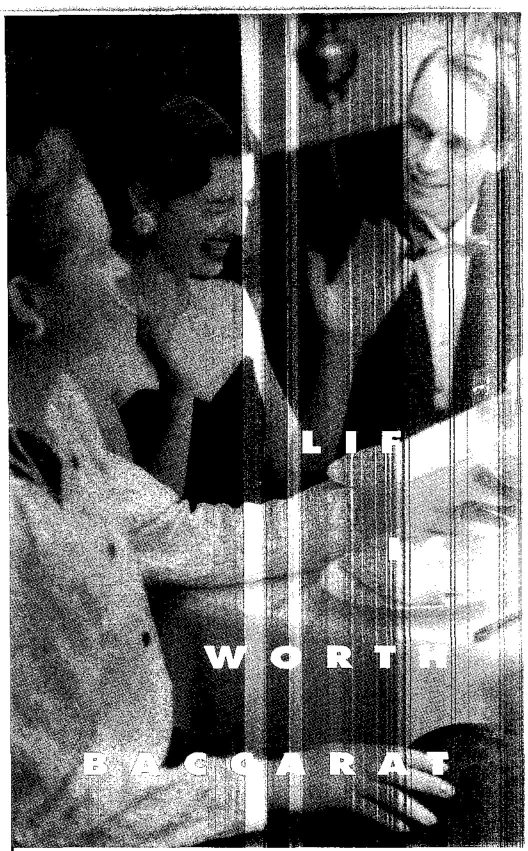
ON the Monday after Biondi was dismissed, his office, on the twenty-eighth floor at Viacom's headquarters, on Broadway, was empty. He had been moved to another Viacom office, on Eighth Avenue; there, on the fifteenth floor, Biondi and his secretary were the only visible employees.

Biondi is too disciplined—and too intent on negotiating a comfortable severance agreement—to show any public anger at the way Redstone treated him. When I stopped by his new office, he was a picture of calm, no doubt aided by the knowledge that he will walk away with a rich settlement. Nevertheless, this is the second time that Biondi has been fired. The first was in 1983, when he was the president of HBO: his boss, Nicholas Nicholas, dismissed him because of strategic differences, and chose to replace him with Michael Fuchs, who was then Biondi's closest friend. "Having been through this thing once before, I view this somewhat less competitively," Biondi told me. "When I left HBO, I felt I had to prove them wrong. This time, I don't feel that way. It was a great run." It must, however, be humiliating for a man who grew up in a home where his father, a scientist, and his mother, a strict housewife, instilled in him the belief that merit wins. By every measurement he knew, Biondi had twice proved his merit, yet he was twice treated as if he had failed.

There are some small consolations. When Fuchs replaced Biondi at HBO, the move nearly wrecked their friendship. That both men have now been fired, just months apart, appears to have cemented a new bond between them. One of the first calls that Biondi got was from Fuchs, to say that when he heard the news on the radio he almost crashed his car, because "I was so shocked and distracted that I coasted past a stop sign and into the middle of an intersection." Fuchs invited the Biondis to dinner at his home, in Bedford, New York, the Saturday after Biondi was dismissed, and raised a glass to toast him. "This completes the cycle," Fuchs says. "We'll never be rivals again. Who knows? Maybe we'll be partners."

Biondi told me, "There's an outside chance I'll do something with Michael." There's also a chance he'll be asked to become C.E.O. of a company like MCA. On January 26th, a week after he was fired, he had lunch with Edgar Bronfman, Jr., the C.E.O. of Seagram, which acquired MCA last year. Biondi, a top Seagram executive says, is a prime candidate for that post.

Reflecting on all the carnage he has witnessed over the past several years, the second-ranking executive of an entertainment giant, who fears that he may be next, searches for a historical comparison. "The entertainment business is like the French Revolution," this executive, who asks for anonymity, says. "All the beheadings are public. You get paraded through, and then you get beheaded. It's embarrassing. But the fact that you're paid so much money and there are so many others who are being beheaded has to make you feel a little better." ♦



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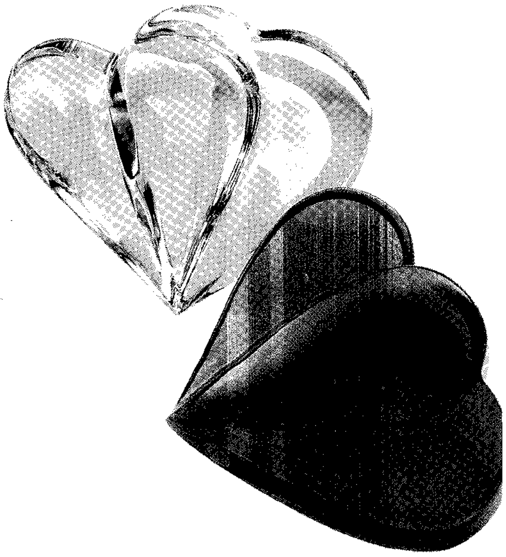

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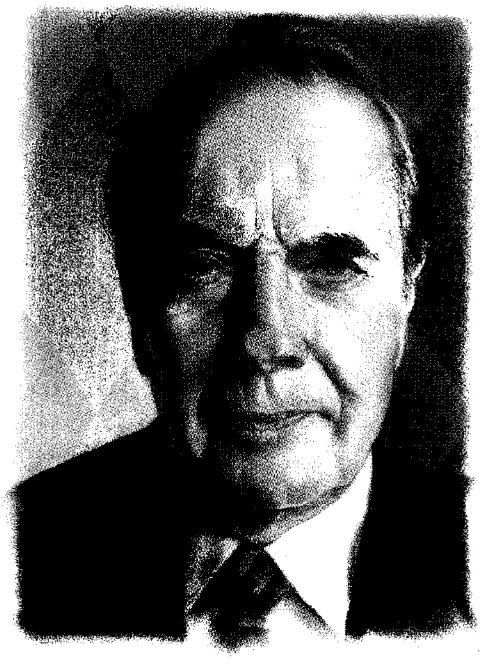
THE POLITICAL SCENE

DON'T EVER CHANGE

Bob Dole sticks with the tried-and-true—which means more misery on the campaign trail.

BY SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL

WHATEVER the poll numbers, whatever the panicked advice from his handlers, there's not going to be a new Bob Dole. The beleaguered front-runner may force a grin for the cameras, but unlike Richard Nixon, his one-time mentor, he steadfastly refuses to repackage himself. A recent ad conveys Dole's sense of complacency: "Steve Forbes. Untested. Just not ready for the job." Bob Dole is tested. Bob Dole is ready. Bob Dole is always going to be what he was. He lacks the flexibility—especially under the duress of perhaps losing the Republican Presidential nomination for the third, and final, time—to be transformed into a sinuous political creature. His aides persuaded him to stop grumbling about the polls in public only by telling him that he sounded like George Bush. Dole may throw himself to the right for repositioning, but the immutable persona that makes his aides so nervous is utterly authentic. "He's in for a tough time, being the front-runner from beginning to end, having the press looking for something different," Robert Teeter, who was George Bush's pollster, says. But Dole has spent an entire career instinctively recoiling from the idea of newness. It offends his rock-ribbed Republicanism and his sturdy concept of himself.

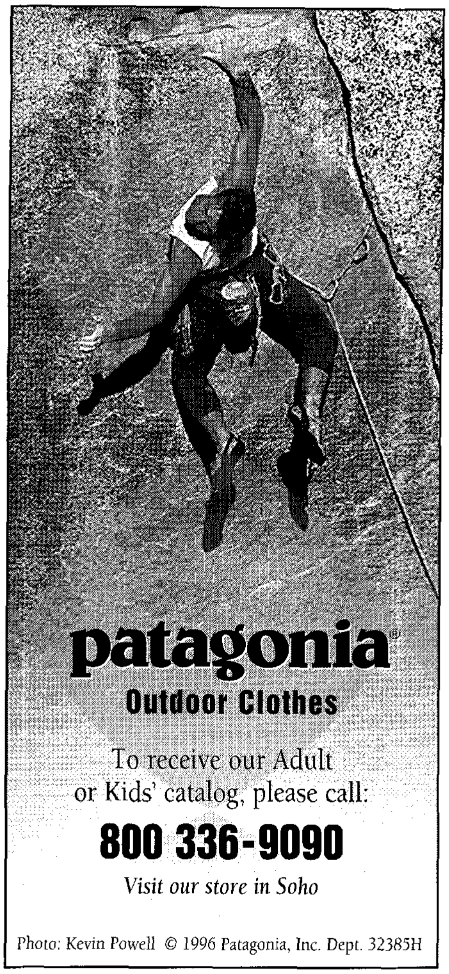


Dole's most intense feelings are provoked by those within his own Party.

SCOTT HUNT

Dole has taken decades to slog to this crisis. His notion of entitlement grows out of his seniority and his unstinting service to the Party in almost every capacity except one: Presidential nominee. "He always wanted to be President," says Charles Black, the director of Phil Gramm's campaign, who has worked with Dole in the past. "He doesn't have any outside interests. He has the sense that something unfair is happening to him, something's being taken away from him. He doesn't have the discipline not to lash out." Dole's intent from the start of this Presidential campaign—the only one he has begun as the front-runner—has been to win it his own way. He has built an organizational juggernaut and staged ceremonies of fealty in nearly every state. (So far, twenty-one of thirty-one Republican governors have endorsed him.) He wanted an overwhelming campaign in which no one else had any oxygen. "Let's face it," David Keene, an adviser to Dole, says. "He takes politics seriously, and he's someone who has worked for everything he's got and resents people who haven't."

It was Dole himself who decided that he should deliver a response to the State of the Union address. His speech was calculated to demonstrate his power, to intimidate his opponents, to reassure everybody, including himself, that he was the forbidding front-runner. Instead, it was the twelve minutes that shook the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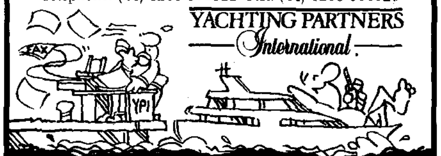
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campaign. The speech conveyed a sense of exhaustion; the melancholy shadows and tones of Dole's appearance brought into high relief an image that his advisers had carefully sought to suppress. But Dole's impulse is to be true to himself.

THE Majority Leader of the Senate, Bob Dole lives high in the Watergate apartment complex, but at heart he still inhabits the Russell, Kansas, home where, during the Depression, his family moved into the basement in order to rent out the upstairs. He remains the son of that small-town agrarian world, where his inexpressive father and self-sacrificing mother drummed into him a fear of debt and the lessons of hard work. Dole told an audience that had gathered after a recent snowstorm to see him at the Iowa Pork Congress, "Thanks to those who got up at 4 A.M. to clean their driveways." As a boy, he got up early every day to do chores. Now his chore is to fend off the insults of the candidates who don't deserve to beat him.

Since Dole's loss to George Bush in 1988, a number of political writers have propagated a mythic Dole—the gallant war hero. Dole's advertising featured a biographical television spot that centered on the injury he received in the Second World War, and Dole has taken to speaking about the campaign and his presumed Presidency as "one more mission." (Bush, in his 1988 acceptance speech, used a similar phrase.) Until this campaign, however, Dole has rarely spoken about his wartime service in heroic terms. Invariably, he described his injury in the style of Bill Mauldin's cartoons of world-weary G.I.s: "Got shot." (Dole does, in fact, still suffer a great deal of physical discomfort.) His advertising, although it flows from the recent romantic interpretation, has not disguised a lasting source of bitterness.

His most intense feelings are provoked by those within his own Party who arise to frustrate him. Dole's conservatism is classical conservatism: he has an inbred suspicion of novelty, of "ideas" and those who claim to have them. Though Dole has been involved in campaigns against Ronald Reagan and George Bush and had to maneuver around Newt Gingrich and Phil Gramm, he has never tried to remake the Party. Rather, he has accumulated Party credentials, which he wears like military ribbons. His Kansas Republicanism has withstood many assaults from movement conservatism, but what has obsessed him above all is the contest of ambition against ambition. Amid the current turmoil, it is of more than passing interest that he voices no personal animosity for the incumbent Democratic President, with whom he has a decent relationship. (They are "a couple of pros," Alan Simpson, of Wyoming, Dole's closest friend in the Senate, says.) Dole unleashes his most bilious invective against rival Republicans who haven't earned it the hard way. Dole's hostilities are a map of internecine warfare.

With Richard Nixon, Dole had a case of mutual attraction and repulsion. Nixon saw in the younger Dole his own yearning ambition and his own dark side, and rewarded and punished him accordingly. It was Nixon who lifted Dole's sights in 1971, when he made him chairman of the Republican National Committee; then Nixon handed Dole his first setback when he replaced him with George Bush. Image was Dole's problem, Nixon decreed. Dole's cycle of disappointment had begun.

In 1976, Dole was chosen as Gerald Ford's running mate, after Vice-President Nelson Rockefeller was forced to withdraw. Dole had little contact with Ford and no discussions of what Ford would do if he were elected. "If I'm asked any policy decisions, I'll plead the Fifth Amendment," he said. In a televised debate with Walter Mondale, Dole created a rancorous image that he has contended with ever since. When a reporter on the debate panel asked him if he thought Ford's pardon of Nixon was a legitimate issue, he tried to deflect the question: "It is an appropriate topic, I guess, but it's not a very good issue, any more than the war in Vietnam would be, or World War II, or World War I, or the war in Korea. All Democrat wars. All in this century. I figured up the other day," he continued, "if we added up all the killed and wounded in Democrat wars in this century, it would be about 1.6 million Americans, enough to fill the city of Detroit." Dole, of course, had been a casualty himself in a "Democrat war."

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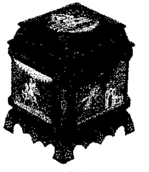

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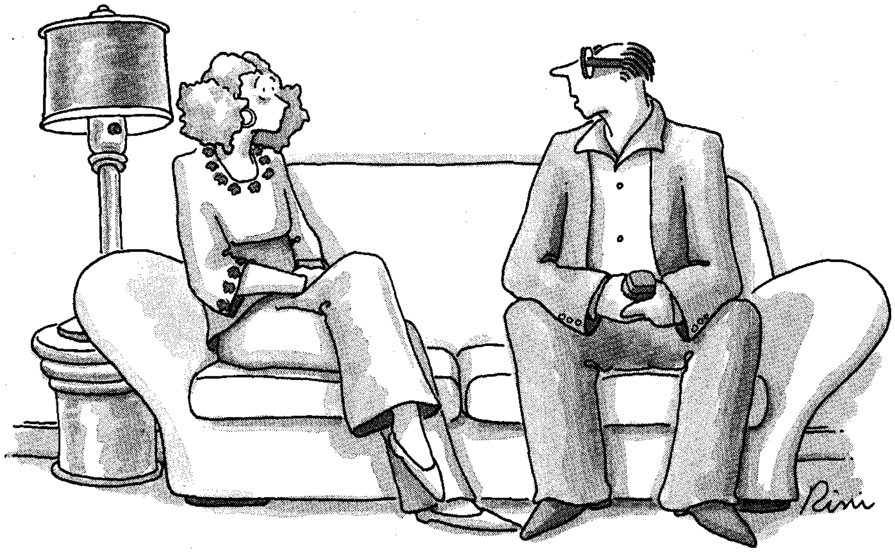

"Rebecca, I'm looking for a bigger emotional share here."

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cycle, but in 1980 Dole finished behind all the other major candidates in New Hampshire, winning just six hundred and seven votes. Ronald Reagan quickly became favored to gain the nomination, and Dole briefly considered retiring from the Senate. He was suspicious of Reagan's optimism and vehemently opposed his "magic formula" supply-side economics as the "easy way." Dole prescribed that "bitter medicine" was needed to counter it. Reagan seemed to him a mysteriously absent figure, but Dole the loyalist bent his knee while trying to raise taxes to close the deficit. He vented his anger on a supply-side champion, Representative Jack Kemp, who, he said, wanted a tax credit for "hair spray" and played football "without a helmet." One adviser to Dole tried to reconcile him to Kemp, but, the adviser told me, "Dole said, 'It's not like Jack is bad, it's that he's embarrassing.' Dole doesn't like to listen to someone babble on."

If Kemp talked too much about "ideas," George Bush was the scion born with a silver spoon in his mouth, who, in Dole's view, had not earned the right to finish ahead of him. In TV ads that ran during the 1988 New Hampshire primary, Bush flayed Dole as "Senator Straddle." "Stop lying about my record," Dole famously raged on network television on the night of the primary.

Dole was bitter about losing to Bush, but, ever the faithful Party man, he became a supporter. "No one was more loyal to George Bush than Bob Dole," Alan Simpson says. "He gave Bush everything of his fibre." Dole at last banked his Presidential ambition, supposing that Bush would have two terms. This time, he took out his anger on the abrasive chief of staff, John Sununu, a former governor of New Hampshire, who had helped engineer Dole's defeat there. The "chief of chaff," he called Sununu. He also dismissed Vice-President Dan Quayle, Bush's designated successor, as "Mr. Potato Head."

When Bush lost to Clinton, in 1992, Dole's ambition was rekindled. "He could run, he could be the front-runner," a Republican politico who has known Dole well for decades said. "He got his entire heart and soul in it." But in the Senate his ambition was under pressure from Phil Gramm, of Texas, who had his own plans to become President. To Dole, the former Democrat Gramm was not a true Republican, not a real conservative; he was a turncoat, a professor—and a cruel and calculating one, at that. In *Time*, Dole said of Gramm, "I'm all for burying the hatchet . . . in him."

EARLY in Clinton's Administration, Dole feigned being a legislator who was prepared to compromise in order to get things done, a role he had actually played for most of his Senate career. But he soon saw that his chance lay in taking a line of opposition, especially in defeating health-care reform that he had initially held to be promising. This approach, which depended on more than forty filibusters—an extraordinary number—made Clinton appear ineffective and stymied Gramm. It kept the Senate Republicans firmly behind their leader. "It's a two-way winner," Robert Teeter said about the strategy.

Dole's game plan was clear: In the 1994 midterm elections, he would become the paramount Republican. The President would be damaged beyond repair. The House would remain Democratic, but by a smaller margin. In the Senate, Dole supposed, he could manage affairs through Alan Simpson, who would be chosen as whip. But the anti-Clinton strategy worked so well that Republicans swept into the House; and the new conservative members of the Senate chose Trent Lott, of Mississippi, as whip.

Newt Gingrich, meanwhile, had become the Speaker of the House, and was now in control of the agenda with the Contract with America. Over the years, Gingrich had expressed contempt for Dole as a "tax collector for the welfare state," who "operates in quicksand," and is on the wrong side of "a generational shift." To Dole, Gingrich is another talker, a professor, an expert on all subjects. The Speaker's loquacious efforts to impress in order to get his way inspire rage in his elders; his self-indulgence doesn't allow him to know when he is being disrespectful. Dole even skipped meetings with Gingrich, telling other politicians, "I don't want to sit there for an hour and listen to his world view."

In the course of the budget negotiations, according to a White House source, Clinton and Dole would joke about who had to talk to Gingrich: "You talk to him." "No, you talk to him." Dole, in joint press conferences with Gingrich on the budget, carefully stepped to the side, trying to get himself out of the picture frame with Gingrich. Dole himself has wavered on the budget impasse, but Gingrich, more than he, has paid the price in popularity.

YET whenever Dole begins to edge toward victory, he summons up a nemesis, and this season it is a Martian, in Dole's view, from New Jersey horse country—Steve Forbes. Forbes is an Easterner who has earned neither his money nor his political standing, and who prattles on about big supply-side ideas. His campaign is almost a parody of the successful 1940 Republican-nomination campaign of the liberal businessman Wendell Willkie, whom he has studied well. Willkie ripped the prize out of the hands of Senator Robert Taft, representative of the old Midwestern conservatism; Forbes hopes to do the same to Dole. Forbes, the wild-eyed optimist, is playing the foil to darkness. "Forbes is exactly the kind of person he would resent," David Keene, the Dole adviser, says. "He's a combination of Bush, Kemp, and Gramm rolled into one. Forbes is mean. It's everything."

Dole has now been forced to throw himself into the arms of the voters, especially in New Hampshire, according to one influential Republican from that state who is supporting him and says it "drives him crazy. This is the place he gets his head bashed in. He can never figure it out." On the stump, Dole carps about his opponents. He doesn't really have a critique of Forbes so much as a complaint that verges on bathos: "Shows that if you've got enough money, you don't get any scrutiny from the media. . . . I don't know, maybe he owns stock in all those networks and *Time* and *Newsweek*. But, somehow, they don't seem to bother him. They'd rather focus on Bob Dole, the front-runner."

Even as Dole falls in poll after poll, he remains the front-runner. He still has the endorsements of Republican officials. They must try to deliver; he has spent a lifetime earning their support. He was supposed to be, like Nixon, an unloved figure who could hold it all together. But he symbolizes the center of a party that no longer exists in its old form, and he offers no hint of where the political middle of the G.O.P. might be except to point to himself—good old Bob Dole.

If he survives his latest crisis, it will be the first time he has done so in Presidential politics. "If Forbes wins a couple of big wins, I don't think that'll carry him into a lock," Senator Simpson says. "Dole is magnificently organized throughout the United States. He has tremendous people out there. He has cadres of people and support systems. He's never been more ready. They're going to stick with him through thick or thin. They're ready to go off the cliff with him." ♦

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LIFE AND LETTERS

PERFECT PITCH

Joseph Brodsky spent much of his life in exile, yet he was the greatest Russian poet of his era.

BY DAVID REMNICK

> What gets left of a man amounts to a part. To his spoken part. To a part of speech.

A FEW weeks ago, I turned on the television in Moscow and channel-surfed. A Bruce Lee movie, dubbed. News. All of it bad. A bank ad with a bimbo stroking cash. Joseph Brodsky: bliss.

I'd spent a long day on the campaign trail following Gennady Zyuganov, the witless leader of the Communist Party, and, since every poll showed the Reds leading the color war, I had the vertiginous feeling of drifting into a time machine that was tugging me—and, more to the point, Russia—back to what the Party used to call "the shining future." Zyuganov spoke in the cadences and the language of the Central Committeeman. Television proved, as it rarely does, a restorative. Brodsky read his poems in a kind of dream voice, the same nasal incantation that stunned his great teacher, Anna Akhmatova, half an age ago in Leningrad. All day, I had been caught between two constituencies: Communists who railed against everything that had changed since 1991 and democrats who argued that nothing had changed. Now there was on the screen the face and the voice of a man at liberty: passionate, ironic, weary, not at all well—heading toward one more heart attack, inevitable as Christmas—but free, absolutely free. The tragedy was that he was so far away and was never coming back.

Brodsky died last week at the criminally early age of fifty-five and will be buried in Venice. A few days before, he had finished work on the galleys of a new collection of poems in English, "So Forth." He left behind a grown son, Andrei, in St. Petersburg, and, in Brooklyn, his widow, Maria, and their two-year-old daughter, Anna.

Ever since the day in 1972 when Brodsky bowed to the official "request" to leave the country for the West (he had been charged with "social parasitism" and branded a "drone of literature"), people had been constantly asking him about Russia—above all, about his visiting Russia, or even returning home for good. They asked him the same questions on Russian television. They asked him everywhere. He always answered more or less the same way. "I find it hard to imagine myself a visitor and performer touring the country in which I was born and grew up," he said once, in Paris. "That will be one more of the absurdities that my existence, as it is, already has in abundance. While it may still make some sense for a criminal to return to the scene of the crime—if he has some money buried there, let's say—it's basically senseless to return to the scene of love. Of course, I could go there and smile, and say, 'Yes,' and accept congratulations, but the idea of that sort of thing I find terribly unpleasant. I've never allowed—and never will—a lot of fuss to be made about my life. That is, I'll always be opposed to it. . . . If I could just show up there quite suddenly as a private individual and see two or three people. . . . On the whole, though, I doubt it."

Brodsky's non-return to Russia was in distinct contrast to Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's return, more than a year ago: his journey began in the Russian Far East and proceeded, via specially outfitted railway car, to Moscow. But while Solzhenitsyn's life is perhaps his greatest work, Brodsky resisted dramatics and mythmaking. He admired Solzhenitsyn, and even called him the Soviet Union's Homer, but he could not bear that level of political engagement. That was not the issue for him.

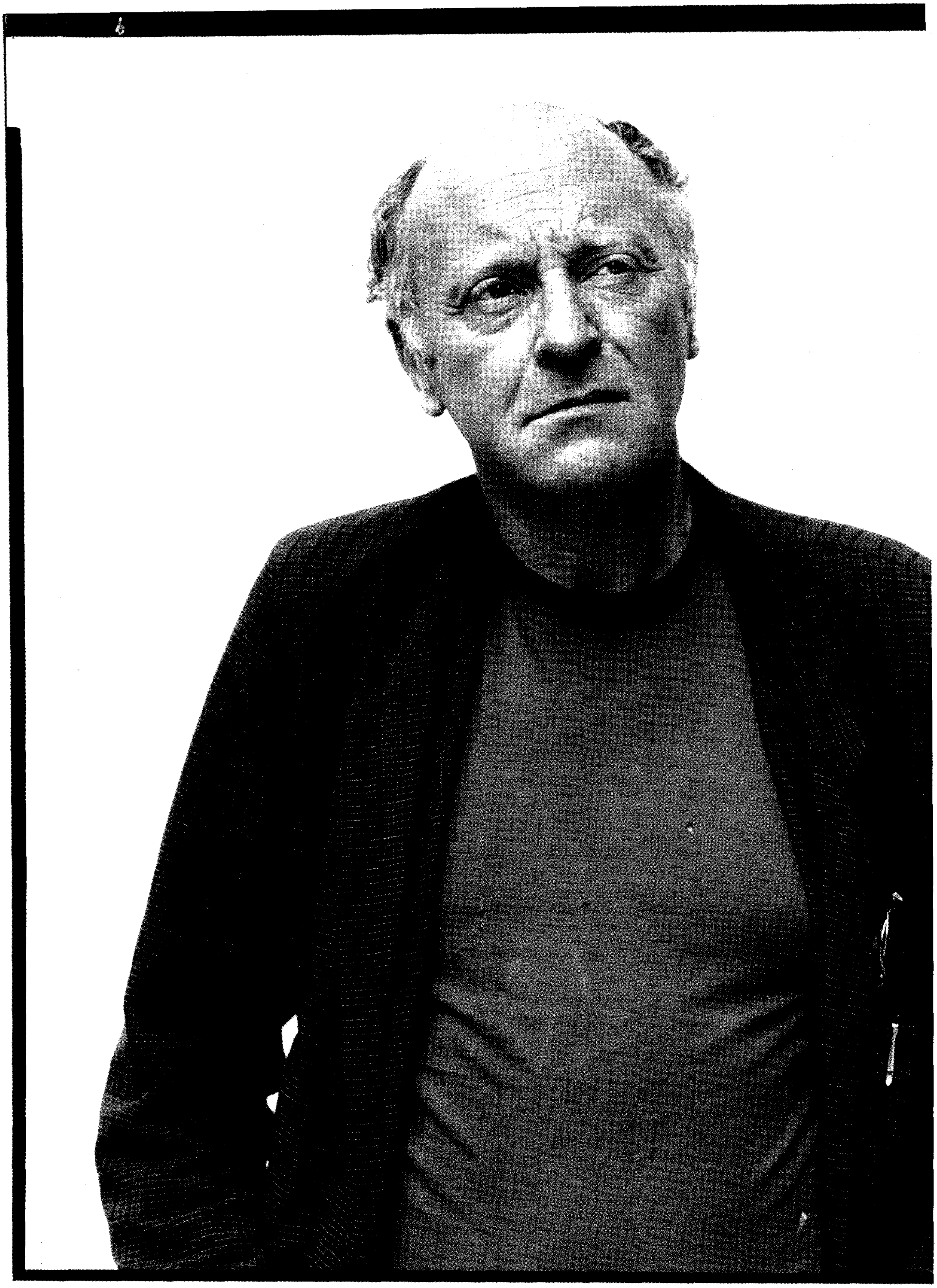
A few weeks before Brodsky won the Nobel Prize, in 1987, I met him at his basement apartment, on Morton Street in the Village. It was the start of glasnost. His poems were being published in Russia for the first time in more than two decades. He did not betray an ounce of joy about it. For the regime to publish his work, and the work of all the other banned writers, was to return stolen property to its rightful owner. There was no need to be grateful to the thief. To the Russian language he was loyal, a great lover and craftsman; of Russia he was suspicious to the end.

"I don't believe in that country any longer," Brodsky said as he cradled his cat, Mississippi. "I'm not interested. I'm writing in the language, and I like the language. I really don't know how to explain it to you. Country is . . . it's people, basically. And I'm one of them. And I'm more or less enough for myself. What's happening in Russia now is devoid of autobiographical interest for me. Maybe it's egocentric. Whatever it is, feel free to use it. When Thomas Mann arrived in California from Germany, they asked him about German literature. And he said, 'German literature is where I am.' It's really a bit grand, but if a German can afford it, I can afford it. Now I am quite prepared to die here. It doesn't matter at all. I don't know better places, or perhaps if I do I am not prepared to make a move."

RUSSIAN readers—that is, the broad swath known as the intelligentsia—are famously contentious; mention the name of nearly any poet or prose

PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD AVEDON

Joseph Brodsky, New York City, June 16, 1991.



writer and someone at the table will pronounce his work unimportant, or worse. In years of living in Russia and travelling back and forth, I have never heard Brodsky dismissed. Solzhenitsyn, yes; Voinovich, Bitov, Tolstaya, yes; never Brodsky. A few might complain that Brodsky was insufficiently Russian, as much a part of world literature as of the Russian pantheon, but that was all. The literary critic Andreĭ Zorin once told me, "I think I have memorized more Brodsky than I have Pushkin, which is saying something." Zorin is not alone.

The shame of it is that in English, a language that Brodsky loved and mastered, his poems are too often ruins of their real selves, or, at best, simulacra. Here and there are well-rendered translations, but very few even hint at his technical skill, his internal rhymes and word play, his wit. Yevgeny Rein, a distinguished poet himself, said one afternoon in Moscow, "America will just have to take our word for it: Brodsky is the great Russian voice of his time. He came from the generation that followed the camps and the blockade, the generation that fed itself on literature when there was nothing but a void. And he was always the best of us."

Brodsky was born in Leningrad in 1940. His father was a news photographer. His parents were Jews—assimilated, but not sufficiently so to make anti-Semitism any less a feature of life. The family lived in one and a half rooms of a communal apartment, the same place where the Symbolist poet Zinaida Gippius lived, and from which she shouted out abuse at the revolutionaries on the street. During the nine-hundred-day siege of the city in the Second World War, Brodsky's father was fighting the Nazis, and he and his mother, like so many Leningraders, nearly starved.

As a schoolboy, Brodsky was bookish and sullen, a red-haired rebel, though his anger was directed less at ideology than at the sheer drabness of Soviet culture and the ubiquity of the image of the Leader. "There was baby Lenin, looking like a cherub in his blond curls," Brodsky wrote in a memoir of his youth. "Then Lenin in his twenties and thirties, bald and uptight, with that meaningless expression on his face which could be mistaken for anything, preferably a sense of purpose. This face in some way haunts every Russian and suggests some sort of standard for human appearance because it is utterly lacking in character." Trying to ignore those images, he wrote, was his "first attempt at estrangement."

PORTRAIT OF TRAGEDY

Let's look at the face of tragedy. Let's see its creases,
its aquiline profile, its masculine jawbone. Let's hear its rhesus
contralto with its diabolic rises:
the aria of effect beats cause's wheezes.
How are you, tragedy? We haven't seen you lately.
Hello, the medal's flip side gone lazy.
Let's examine your aspects, lady.

Let's look into her eyes. Into her wide-with-senseless-
pain hazel pupils aimed like lenses
at us in the stalls, or touring in someone else's
predicament, on false pretenses.
Welcome, tragedy, with gods and heroes,
with the curtain exposing your feet, dirty with other eras,
with proper names sunk in the maddening chorus.

Let's put our fingers into her mouth that gnashes
scurvy-eaten keyboards inflamed by wolfram flashes
showing her spit-rich palate with blizzards of kinfolk's ashes.
Let's yank her hem, see if she blushes.
Well, tragedy, if you want, surprise us.
Show us a body betrayed or its demise, devices
for lost innocence, inner crisis.

Ah, but to press ourselves against her cheek, her Gorgon
coiling hairdo! Against the golden
icon's coarse wooden backside that hoards the burden
of proof the better the more her horizons broaden.
Greetings, tragedy, dressed slightly out of fashion,
with lengthy sentences making time look ashen.
Though you feel fine alfresco, it's the morgue you've got a crush on.

Let's tumble into her arms with a lecher's ardor!
Let's drown in her flabby rubble; yes, let's go under.
Let's burrow through her and make mattress fodder.
Who knows, she may carry. A race always needs a founder.
What's new on the schedule, tragedy, in your cartridge?
And re stuffing wombs, what takes more courage
to star in: a scene of carnage or a pile of garbage?

Ah, to inhale her stench of armpits and feces
mixed with the incense clouding subtracted faces;
to exclaim hysterically, You save this
for the sissies! And throw up into her laces.
Thanks, tragedy, for your attempts to cheer up
(since there is no abortion without a cherub),
for jackboots kicking the groin as though it's a stirrup.

Stalin died in 1953. Brodsky was twelve. He and his schoolmates were called into the auditorium, and the "class mentor" gave them the news. "She began a funeral oration," Brodsky told the writer Solomon Volkov, "and suddenly cried out in a wild voice: 'On your knees! On your knees!' Pandemonium broke

Her face is abominable! It's never hidden
by the domino, makeup, duckweed, by heathen
ignorance, or by a fishnet mitten
involved in a stormy ovation, completely smitten.
Thanks, tragedy, for playing decent.
For being direct like a bullet, albeit distant.
For not wasting time, for happening in an instant.

Who are we, after all, neither oils nor statues,
not to allow the mangling of our lives as much as
one wishes? Which, too, could be seen as a boon. The catch is,
a thing must become unpalpable to look matchless.
Don't spurn that, tragedy, the genre of martyrs!
How about the loss of all that's sacred to us for starters?
Small wonder that togas become you as much as tatters.

Look at her, she is scowling! She says, "Good evening,
let me begin. In this business, folks, the beginning
matters more than the end. Give me a human being,
and I'll begin with misfortune, so set the wristwatch for grieving."
Go ahead, tragedy! Among our vowels,
pick out the "yi," born in the Mongol bowels,
and turn it, ripping our gushing ovals,

into a noun, a verb, an adjective! "yi," our common gargle!
"yi," we barf out as our gains and our losses ogle
us, or as we storm the exit. But there, an ogre,
you're looming large with your oblong cudgel and bulging goggle!
Tragedy, hit us like a relative. Make clowns of us.
Knead us into a pulp on our bunks and sofas.
Spit into our souls till you find a surface,

and afterwards also! Make it a swamp, and stir it,
so that neither the Father and Son nor the Holy Spirit
will clear it up. Curdle it into the serried
rubble. Plant there aspens, shoot up acid, and leave needles buried.
May soul be like nature, tragedy; that won't wear badly.
Let's graft a seraph to the night-work buggy.
As a fruit told the botanist, Fine, make me ugly.

Once you were, dear, a beauty, a power, a non-stop torrent.
You'd come after midnight and flash a warrant.
You were quoting Racine; obscene you weren't.
Now you are the perspective stewed in the dead end. A worried
herd, though, finds its address, and a lamb an oven
by spotting your footprint that's fresh and cloven.
Come on! Fly the gates of your pigsty open.

—JOSEPH BRODSKY
(1940-1996)

(*Translated, from the Russian, by the author.*)

out. Everyone was howling and weeping and it was somehow expected of me to cry, too, but—to my shame then; now, I think, to my honor—I couldn't. When I got home, my mother was also crying. I looked at her with some astonishment, until my father suddenly gave me a wink. Then I realized for sure that there was no particular reason for me to get upset over Stalin's death."

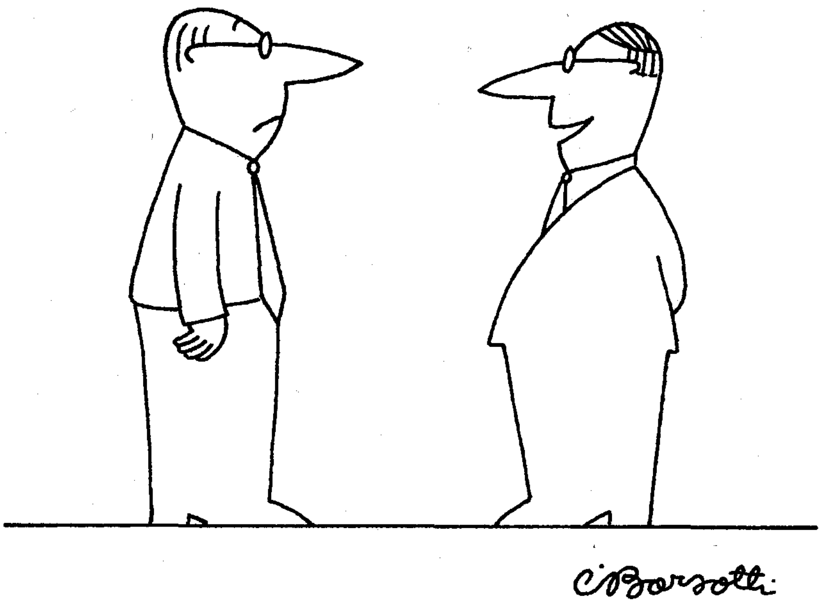
Brodsky's estrangement from the state ripened in adolescence, and, at fifteen, he dropped out of school. Between 1956 and 1962, he held thirteen jobs. He worked as a milling-machine operator at a defense plant and as a stoker in a boiler room; he travelled with geological expeditions to the Chinese border, to Siberia, to the top of a glacier. He even worked as an assistant in the dissecting room of a hospital morgue, slicing up corpses, scooping out the organs, and stitching up the skin. "You know, I rather liked that job," Brodsky told me. "It was a shame to quit that one, *ya*?"

In his late teens, Brodsky started writing poems, and he fell in with a group of young writers that included Yevgeny Rein, Dmitri Bobyshev, and Anatoly Naiman. "The idea of individualism, of a man on his own, all by himself, was our proud property," Brodsky wrote many years later. "But the possibility of realizing it was minuscule, if it existed at all." The only path was literature and the private experience of reading. The poets' rebellion against tyranny consisted of almost total submersion in language—in Pushkin and Baratynsky, Mandelstam and Tsvetayeva, Pasternak and Akhmatova. Brodsky learned Polish and, in particular, English. It was not easy to get hold of English-language books, and two that he eventually managed to find, poetry anthologies edited by Oscar Williams and Louis Untermeyer, were precious; both contained tiny black-and-white photographs of his heroes—above all, Auden, Frost, and Hardy—and from those tiny images he tried to imagine them, their personalities, their voices.

In 1961, Rein, the eldest of the group, brought Brodsky to see Akhmatova, who at the time was the greatest living poet in Russia, a grande dame—"the keening muse," he later called her. Brodsky recited some of his poems for her, and she took a liking to him. She practically adopted the group—her "magic choir"—and was especially adoring of, and worried about, Joseph. Akhmatova, writing in 1962, foresaw a tragic fate for him:

> I don't weep for myself now,
> But let me not be on earth to witness
> The golden stamp of failure
> On this yet untroubled brow.

BY 1963, Khrushchev had reversed the Thaw. Sensing the suicidal implications of an open society, the Soviet leadership began a neo-Stalinist phase that lasted twenty-odd years. Even now,



"Yes, and the fact that you've been an outstanding employee for twenty-five years is going to look great on your résumé."

some historians wonder why the regime began its cultural crackdown by arresting a little-known twenty-three-year-old poet. But it is a mystery only if one doubts tyranny's instinct for sniffing out its greatest threat.

Following a Supreme Soviet decree to "intensify" the "struggle" against those without "socially useful work," the Leningrad K.G.B. arrested Brodsky and locked him up in Crosses, a transit prison. According to Efim Etkind's book on the trial, "Protsess Iosifa Brodskogo" ("The Trial of Joseph Brodsky"), the charges included holding a "world view damaging" to the state; "decadence and modernism"; a failure to finish school; and, of course, "parasitism . . . except for the writing of awful poems." An article in the local paper, the *Evening Leningrad*, described Brodsky as a "semiliterary parasite whose pornographic and anti-Soviet poetry" corrupted the young. The article also provided its readers with the information that Brodsky had once tried to steal an airplane and wore "velvet trousers."

A number of artists and writers came to Brodsky's defense, not least Akhmatova, Etkind, Lydia Chukovskaya, and Dmitri Shostakovich. But Brodsky's most important ally was a rather obscure and owlish journalist named Frida Vigdorova, who assigned herself the dangerous task of attending the trial, transcribing what went on, and then spreading the news in samizdat. Her transcriptions are a marvel of the anti-totalitarian genre, superior to any of Havel's plays:

The Court: What is your work?

Brodsky: I write poems, I translate. I believe . . .

The Court: There will be no "I believe." Stand straight! Don't lean on the wall. Look at the Court. Answer the Court as directed! Now, do you have full-time work?

Brodsky: I thought that I had full-time work, yes.

The Court: Answer precisely!

Brodsky: I wrote poems. I thought that they would be published. I believe . . .

The Court: We are not interested in "I believe." Answer: why were you not working?

Brodsky: I worked. I wrote poems.

The Court: This does not interest us. We are interested in what firm you were connected to.

Brodsky: I had agreements with a publishing house.

The Court: Did your contract provide you with enough to feed yourself? Name them: provide dates, sums.

Brodsky: I don't remember precisely. My lawyer has the contracts.

The Court: I am asking you.

Brodsky: In Moscow, two books of my translations were published.

The Court: What is your work experience?

Brodsky: More or less . . .

The Court: We are not interested in "more or less."

Brodsky: Five years.

The Court: Where did you work?

Brodsky: In a factory. With geological expeditions . . .

The Court: And in general, what is your specialty?

Brodsky: Poet. Poet and translator.

The Court: And who deigned that you are a poet? Who put you in the ranks of the poets?

Brodsky: Nobody. Who put me in the ranks of mankind?

The Court: Did you study for this?

Brodsky: Study for what?

The Court: To become a poet. You never tried to finish college where they prepare . . . where they study . . .

Brodsky: I didn't think that this was a matter of education.

The Court: How is that?

Brodsky: I thought . . . well, I thought it came from God.

The judge did her best to keep to her script. She badgered Brodsky. She called to the witness stand comrades who, in the style of 1937, were more than willing to testify to Brodsky's sins. One man claimed that his son had fallen under Brodsky's evil spell—had quit work and decided that he, too, was a genius. The same man said that Brodsky's poems—meditations on time and death and love—were somehow anti-Soviet. "Which one?" Brodsky interrupted. "Name one!" Of course, the man could not. No one had prepped him for that.

Vigdorova wrote a letter to Chukovskaya about Brodsky's trial. "Perhaps one day he will become a great poet," she said, "but I will never forget how he looked—helpless, with an expression of astonishment, irony, and challenge all at the same time."

"The lot had fallen on him by chance," Etkind wrote. "There were many other talented poets at the time who might have been in his place. But once the lot fell upon him he understood the responsibility of his position—he was no longer a private person but had become a symbol, the way Akhmatova had been in 1946, when she was picked out of hundreds of possible poets to be punished and became a national symbol of the Russian poet, as Brodsky had become that day. It was hard for Brodsky—he had bad nerves, a bad heart. But he played his role in the trial impeccably."

In the end, Brodsky was sentenced to five years in internal exile. He worked in the northern village of Norinskaya, in the bogs near the White Sea. Only Akhmatova, who had been through so much more, who had lost so much family, so many friends, in the meat grinder of the Lenin and Stalin years, could manage a smile and the crack "What a biography *they're creating for our redhead! You'd think he hired them."*

WHEN I asked Brodsky about his time in internal exile, he told me that he had actually enjoyed it. He enjoyed pulling on his boots and working on a collective farm, enjoyed shovelling manure. Knowing that everyone else across Russia was shovelling shit, too, he felt a sense of nation, of kinship. He was not kidding. In the evenings, sitting in his shack, Brodsky had time to write his "awful poems" and indulge himself in the "bourgeois formalism" of his idols. Two stanzas of Auden struck him to the core:

Time that is intolerant
Of the brave and innocent,
And indifferent in a week
To a beautiful physique,

Worships language and forgives
Everyone by whom it lives;
Pardons cowardice, conceit,
Lays its honours at their feet.

Brodsky was affected not merely by the way Auden imparted wisdom—tossing it off as if it were folklore—but by the wisdom itself, the idea that language is superior, is more ancient and enduring than everything else, that even time bows before it. Brodsky made that a dominant theme of his poetry, and a central principle of his prose and his teaching.

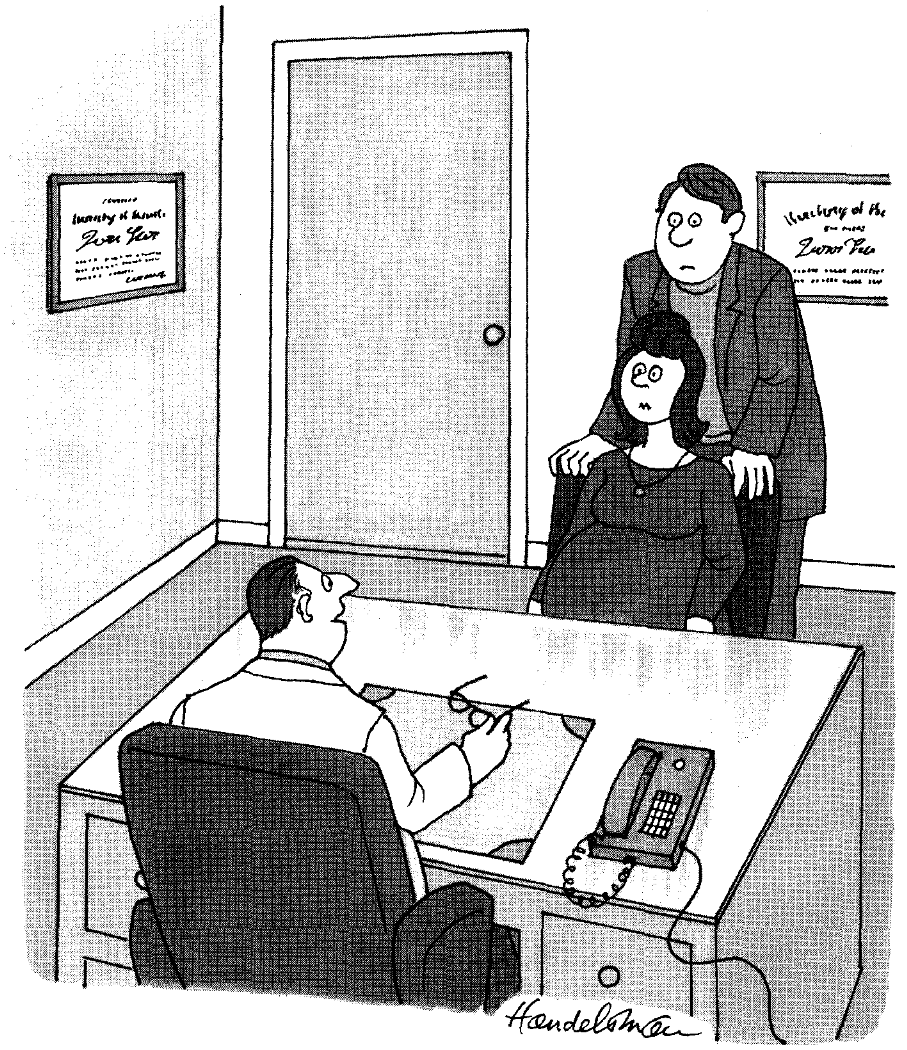
Sitting in his shack, smoking, his back aching from the pitchfork, dung on his boots, the reek of the bog still on his clothes, Brodsky could not imagine that twenty years later, dressed in fine and odorless cloth, he would step to the lectern at the Swedish Academy, in Stockholm, and, by way of accepting the grandest prize in literature, declare the primacy of literature, not as entertainment or instruction but as the concentrated moral imperative of mankind. If his life's work had a singular message, it was what he learned in the stanzas of Auden:

> The revulsion, irony, or indifference often expressed by literature toward the state is essentially the reaction of the permanent—better yet, the infinite—against the temporary, against the finite. To say the least, as long as the state permits itself to interfere with the affairs of literature, literature has the right to interfere with the affairs of state. A political system, a form of social organization, like any system in general, is by definition a form of the past tense that aspires to impose itself upon the present (and often on the future as well); and a man who works in grammar is the last one who can afford to forget this. The real danger for a writer is not so much the possibility (and often the certainty) of persecution on the part of the state as it is the possibility of finding oneself mesmerized by the state's features, which, whether monstrous or undergoing changes for the better, are always temporary. . . .
>
> Every new aesthetic reality makes one's experience even more private; and this kind of privacy, assuming at times the guise of literary (or some other) taste, can in itself turn out to be, if not a guarantee, then a form of defense, against enslavement. For a man with taste, particularly with literary taste, is less susceptible to the refrains and the rhythmical incantations peculiar to any version of political demagogy. The point is not so much that virtue does not constitute a guarantee for producing a masterpiece as that evil, especially political evil, is always a bad stylist. . . . It is precisely in this applied, rather than Platonic, sense that we should understand Dostoevsky's remark that beauty will save the world, or Matthew Arnold's belief that we shall be saved by poetry. It is probably too late for the world, but for the individual man there always remains a chance.

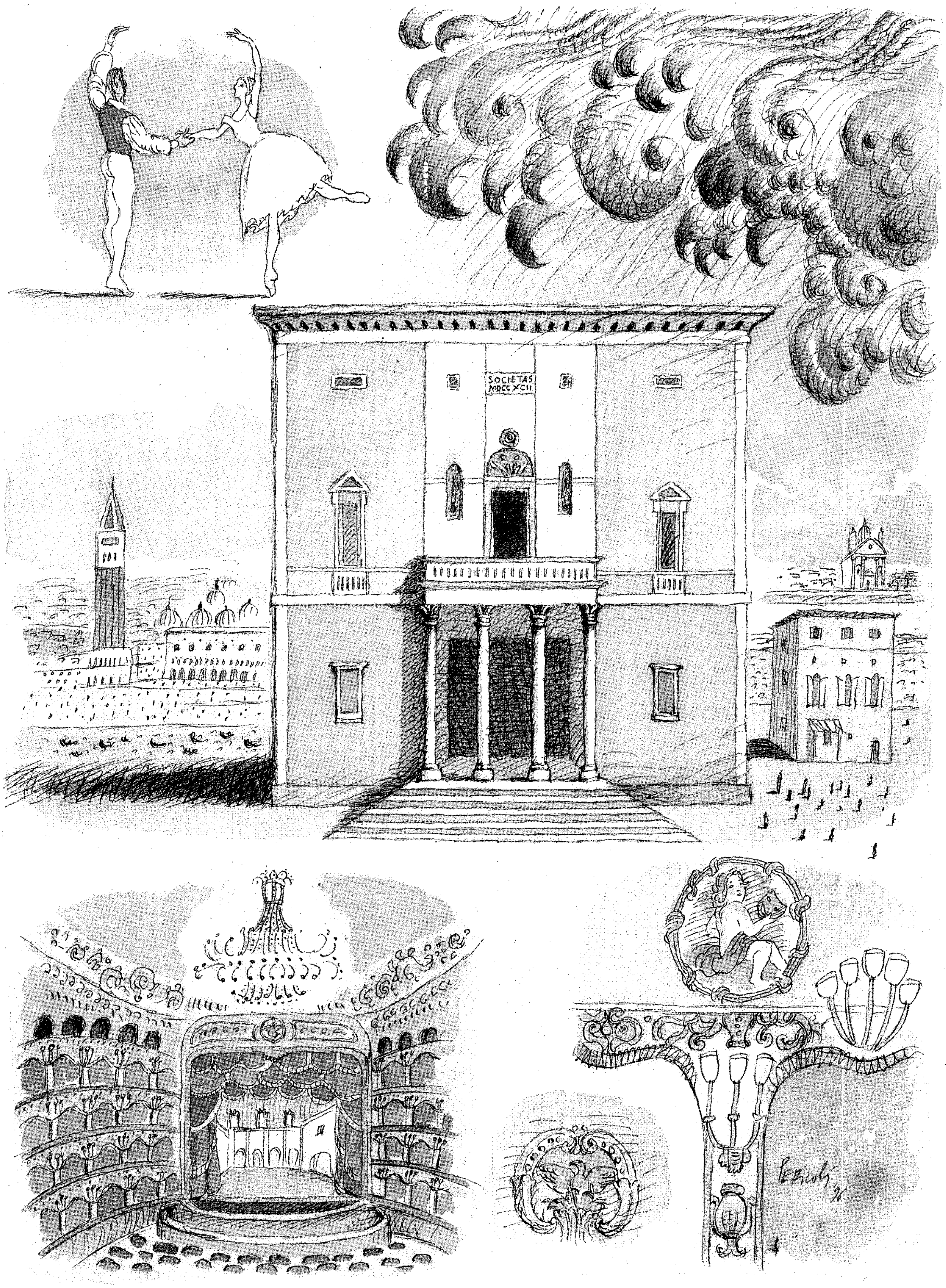
WHEN the Soviet authorities grew tired of the flow of telegrams from abroad, they sent Brodsky home, cutting short his sentence by more than three years. Back in Leningrad, Brodsky began writing some of the strongest poetry of his career. By thirty, he was assuring for himself a permanent place in the Russian—and international—pantheon. The K.G.B., a keen critic but a poor judge of character, offered to arrange a publication deal for Brodsky if he would collaborate. He refused. He was not published. In May, 1972, the visa department of the local police suggested that he apply to leave the country immediately, according to Volkov's book "St. Petersburg."

"And if I refuse?" he said.

"Then, Brodsky, in the very near



"The good news is that you will have a healthy baby girl. The bad news is that she is a congenital liar."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ARTIST AT LARGE

THE PHOENIX

MEMORIES don't burn. An opera house isn't made just of wood and gilt and plush; it has, too, the invisible fabric of its history. In that respect, La Fenice, the Venetian masterpiece that was gutted by fire last week, still stands. This is where Rigoletto first discovered his daughter near death in a sack, and where the Duke first laughingly sang "La donna è mobile." This is where Violetta first died, and returned at the next performance to sing "Sempre libera" all over again. This is where Nick Shadow first misled Tom Rakewell—where Stravinsky wanted his biggest work to have its birth. This is where Britten's children first encountered the ghosts of Miss Jessel and Peter Quint. And this is where the hero of Nono's "Intolleranza 1960" first raged against injustice.

The name and the shell of the theatre (as it is for the moment) have other echoes wreathing them. It was in Venice, in 1637, that opera made the step from court entertainment to public spectacle: La Fenice is the proud successor to the theatres in which the music of Monteverdi, the artistry of performers, and the magic of stage machinists created the first opera boom. Gathered up under the sign of this theatre are later musical masquerades of the Venetian carnival and early works of Rossini. Reverberant here as well are the voices of those who have appeared at La Fenice: Giuditta Pasta and Giuditta Grisi, rival sopranos of the early Romantic age, creating roles in new operas by Bellini; Maria Callas, singing Brünnhilde in "Die Walküre"; Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, in that first "Rake"; Peter Pears, as the first Peter Quint; and many others in a chorus of two centuries.

La Fenice, phoenix indeed, burned down once before, in 1836, and was restored. Already, Luciano Pavarotti has announced that he will give a concert in Piazza San Marco whose proceeds will go toward rebuilding the theatre—returning it again to its rococo splendor. The ghosts will wait to regain possession.

—PAUL GRIFFITHS

DRAWING BY TULLIO PERICOLI

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future you will have a very hot time."

Before leaving, Brodsky wrote a letter to the Party's General Secretary, Leonid Brezhnev. "I am bitter to have to leave Russia. I was born here, grew up here, lived here, and everything I have in my soul I owe to it," he wrote. "Once I stop being a citizen of the U.S.S.R. I will not stop being a Russian poet. I believe I will return; poets always return—in the flesh or on paper. . . . We are all condemned to the same thing: death. I, who am writing these lines, will die, and you, who are reading them, will die, too. Our work will be left, but even that will not last forever. That is why no one should interfere with another in doing his work." There is no evidence that Brezhnev read the letter. There was no response.

Brodsky left Russia on a plane for Austria with his typewriter (which the K.G.B. kindly disassembled for him at the airport), a change of clothes, a volume of Donne, and a bottle of vodka—a present for Wystan Auden. In Austria, he met his hero, who was kind to him and happily drank the vodka. A young professor of Russian literature at the University of Michigan, Carl Proffer, the only Virgil Brodsky would ever need in the West, suggested that he come to Ann Arbor. Brodsky thought, What the hell, let the change be one hundred per cent, and agreed:

And as for where in space and time one's toe end touches,
well, earth is hard all over; try the States.

BRODSKY tried the States, first Michigan, then New York. He may well be the most successful exile of his time. As a poet, he was not slowed down or disoriented by the English in the air. He said that he rejected the bravura multilingualism of Nabokov, but ("What the hell, *ya*?") he wrote most of the essays in "Less Than One" and "On Grief and Reason" in English. He said that it was faster that way. He taught at Michigan and Mount Holyoke, and, despite an outer shell of put-upon irony, proved generous to young writers. He fell in (and sometimes out) with, in no particular order, Derek Walcott, Seamus Heaney, Susan Sontag, Richard Wilbur, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Anthony Hecht, Isaiah Berlin, Mark Strand, Robert Silvers, Roger Straus. He married Maria Sozzani, a younger woman, half Italian, half Russian, a serene beauty out of Fra Angelico. They moved to Brooklyn Heights and had a daughter. In 1991, Brodsky was Poet Laureate and, in an address at the Library of Congress, suggested that the government help subsidize the publication of an anthology of American poetry to be sold door to door or in drugstores, to be placed in motel rooms next to the Gideon Bible. (Such a program, in nonprofit form, has begun, if more modestly.) "American poetry is this country's greatest patrimony," he said. "It takes a stranger to see some things clearly. This is one of them, and I am that stranger. Fifty million copies of an anthology of American poetry for two dollars a copy can be sold in a country of two hundred and fifty million. Perhaps not at once, but gradually, over a decade or so, they will sell. Books find their readers. And if they will not sell, well, let them lie around, absorb dust, rot, and disintegrate. There is always going to be a child who will fish a book out of the garbage heap. I was such a child, for what it's worth."

Brodsky was unlucky with his health, and more than a little foolish about it. He had open-heart surgery twice and was facing a third operation. He smoked more cigarettes than Bogart, drank more coffee than Balzac. When I was with him one afternoon, interviewing him for the Washington *Post*, a photographer arrived. "Do you have cigarettes?" Brodsky said by way of hello. "I am dying for cigarettes."

He refused the role of celebrity martyr and did his work, but in those moments when he was called on by fate to step forward—in the courtroom, in exile—he did so with perfect pitch. Nadezhda Mandelstam, in her memoir "Hope Abandoned," wrote that Brodsky was "a remarkable young man who will come to a bad end, I fear." Joseph Brodsky is ended, it is true, but Mandelstam was wrong. He died with his work finished and published in the languages that mattered to him, and he died in a place that was home, or home enough. It was language, not biography, for him: the lyric, not the epic. There was never any reason to return to St. Petersburg:

Having sampled two
oceans as well as continents, I feel that I know
what the globe itself must feel: there's nowhere to go.
Elsewhere is nothing more than a far-flung strew
of stars, burning away. ♦

SALT CITY

What did the war in Bosnia do to a tolerant and industrious city like Tuzla? Its people tell stories of what could not be defeated.

BY WILLIAM FINNEGAN

HARIS HUREM got ethnically cleansed while playing cards with friends one Friday night in June, 1992. It happened in Grbavica, a fashionable Sarajevo neighborhood where Haris, then a twenty-three-year-old economics student, lived with his parents. The war had started two months earlier, as the international community prepared to recognize the independence of Bosnia-Herzegovina from Yugoslavia. Rebel Bosnian Serbs, supported by the Yugoslav Army, had already overrun much of the country, expelling and slaughtering tens of thousands of Muslims. In Sarajevo, the rebels had already taken most of the western suburbs, and now they were slowly, brutally expanding their hold on Grbavica, which is near the city's center but backs against hills that the Serbs controlled. Before the war, the neighborhood had been ethnically mixed. Now the Bosnian Serb military police were going door to door. When they burst into the apartment where Haris and his friends were playing cards, they inspected everyone's documents, then took away the two young men with Muslim names.

Haris's parents had been at their weekend house when the war broke out. Caught by surprise, like most Bosnians, they had been unable to get home to Sarajevo, though they were less than a dozen miles away. Their youngest son was with them; their two older boys were in the city. For the first few weeks, they kept in touch with Haris, the oldest, and his brother by telephone. Then the phone lines were cut. In late May, rebel troops came to the mountain village where the Hurems were marooned.

Haris Hurem: "I know how things run on the other side when you're caught."

MAGNUM PHOTOS INC.

They burned houses; they destroyed the mosque. Haris's father, Zihno, a civil engineer, sent his wife and son on foot through the forest to Kiseljak, a small town fifteen miles northwest of Sarajevo. Twelve days later, warned by a Serb neighbor to flee for his life, Zihno followed them. Zihno had grown up in a village near Kiseljak, and his brother still lived there, so he and his wife and son moved in with his brother. There was no news of the boys trapped in the city.

Haris, meanwhile, had been put in a concentration camp. His captors had accused him, improbably, of burning seven rebel tanks and killing twenty Serbs. They beat him severely while interrogating him. The camp was in Lukavica, a Sarajevo suburb near the airport. Hundreds, possibly thousands, of Muslims and Croats were taken there. Rebel soldiers and militiamen entertained themselves by raping the women, by carving crosses into the backs of the Muslim men, by chopping off the three fingers used in the traditional Serbian salute, or by simply killing inmates. The camp's guards were themselves rarely the perpetrators of these atrocities; the villains tended to be fighters from the countryside, men with a ferocious hatred and fear of the Bosnian urban élite, of Croats in general, whom they called Ustashe (after the Croatian Fascist regime that murdered hundreds of thousands of Serbs in the Second World War), and of Muslims in general (whom they called fundamentalists, though Bosnian Muslims are, on the whole, a strikingly secular group). Haris was kept busy digging graves: half a metre deep for Muslims and Croats, two metres deep for the infrequent Serb corpse. The diet for inmates was bread and water. Conditions were unspeakable, and many inmates died within days.

The Lukavica camp was not a secret. It was actually part of the headquarters complex of General Ratko Mladic, the rebel Bosnian Serbs' military chief. Haris, assigned to sweep near command headquarters, once saw General Mladic and Radovan Karadzic, the President of the self-styled Serb Republic, walk past. On another occasion, while digging a trench, he saw, beyond the barbed wire, Karadzic and the Canadian general Lewis MacKenzie, who was then in charge of the United Nations force in Bosnia, eating and drinking together outdoors. There was even a U.N. barracks not far away, and Haris once encountered a Canadian U.N. soldier in a latrine he had been sent to clean near General Mladic's headquarters. Haris, who spoke fluent English, appealed to the soldier. He told him that people were being tortured and executed every day in the Lukavica camp. The soldier hurried away. He did not want to hear about it.

In late July, Zihno, still staying with his brother in the mountains, heard a rumor that Haris was in a Serb prison. He wrote a letter to the International Committee of the Red Cross, but got no reply. He made informal inquiries locally, and, finally, toward the end of the year, he got a break. The Bosnian government was starting to put an army in the field, scrambling to stop the rebels' advances, and in a battle southwest of Kiseljak government troops had captured a fighter who turned out to be the brother of an important Bosnian Serb police commander. Friends of Zihno's thought a prisoner exchange might be arranged. They brought Zihno the police commander's brother.

Zihno, who is a gentle, white-haired, highly cultured man, began an excruciating series of negotiations with his son's jailers over the telephone. At first, they told him that Haris was dead. Zihno said that in that case he wanted his son's body, and that if an autopsy showed that Haris had indeed died at some point before this conversation the police commander's brother would be released.

Haris, in the meantime, was moved from Lukavica to Hadzici, a Serbian-held town west of Sarajevo, where he was fed relatively well. He did not know that his father was in contact with the Serbs, or that they were trying to decide what to do with him. It was now December; he had been in captivity for six months. The sticking point of the negotiations for his release, it later became clear, was that he had seen too much brutality inside Lukavica.

But the police commander wanted his brother back just as badly as Zihno wanted his son, and eventually the exchange was set. It took place in late December, near the Hurems' weekend house, at a snow-covered checkpoint manned by Bosnian Croat forces, who were at that time on the sidelines in the war between the Serb rebels and the Muslim-led government. Haris and the police commander's brother each walked alone to the checkpoint. When they met, they kissed. "What else could we do?" Haris said later. "We were both prisoners." For a moment or so, Zihno did not recognize his son, who had not bathed or shaved or had a haircut for six months. In the car riding back to a cousin's house, Zihno held on to his son so tightly that Haris complained that he couldn't breathe.

I recently heard this story from both Zihno and Haris, in a series of overlapping narratives, in Tuzla, an industrial city fifty miles northeast of Sarajevo. Friends of theirs had suggested that I ask them about it. Neither father nor son had seemed eager to talk. Haris had already given a detailed statement to Bosnian government war-crimes investigators on what he had seen at Lukavica. Zihno gets choked up when he thinks about Haris's ordeal. Once they started talking to me, however, each man seemed intent on making sure I understood exactly what had happened.

FOR a visitor to Bosnia these days, it sometimes seems as if half the people you meet, after nearly four years of pervasive, weirdly intimate war, have an extraordinary story to tell, a Balkan "Doctor Zhivago" of their own survival. It also seems as if many of them feel, in a land where solid, agreed-upon historical facts can be hard to come by, a peculiar responsibility to get at least their own part of it right. Zihno drew me a map, with all the towns, villages, roads, and shifting front lines in his tale rendered with an engineer's precision. He even used different-colored felt pens to show which forces held which territory when.

"Oh, those colored pens," Haris said. "Every night, when we were kids, he'd want to see our homework, and then he'd get out his colored pens to show us how algebra really works."

Haris is now twenty-six, but he looks much younger. Somehow, I think, he

PHOTOGRAPHS BY GILLES PERESS

should look *older*, considering what he's been through. But Bosnia has a way of confounding such expectations. Haris has a quickness, a sturdy, supple brightness about him, that is the farthest thing from what one associates with post-traumatic stress, with survivor guilt. He looks, for that matter, nothing like what Westerners usually associate with the word "Muslim." He is fair-skinned, blond, and hazel-eyed; his physical appearance is more Scandinavian than Levantine. He drinks alcohol (indeed, he's now the co-owner of a bar in Tuzla), smokes cigarettes, eats pork, and has never set foot in a mosque. He recently got married, and he did it the old, Communist way: at the mayor's office, without religious sanction. What is more, his new wife, Aleksandra, is a Serb.

"I grew up in Tuzla," Aleksandra, a poised young woman, told me. "So most of my friends are Muslim. It's no big deal."

Haris shrugged. "That's right," he said. "No big deal."

Tuzla is in fact known for its indifference to ethnic passions. Back in 1990, local elections were held throughout what was then the Yugoslav republic of Bosnia, and Tuzla's was the only significant contest won by anti-nationalists—by the Reformisti, a social-democratic coalition. The three big nationalist parties, representing Muslims, Serbs, and Croats, won everywhere else, strictly according to which group was most numerous in a district. (These groups are actually less distinct ethnically—since in Bosnia they all speak the same language and share the same land and much of the same history—than they are distinct religiously: Croats are Catholics, Serbs are Eastern Orthodox. Even so, the lines can be blurry. Degrees of devoutness range widely, of course, and then there are the countless people of mixed ancestry.) Since the Muslims were the largest group in Bosnia (forty-four per cent in the 1991 census, compared with thirty-one per cent identifying themselves as Serbs and seventeen per cent as Croatians), they gained effective control of the republic's central government. What almost no one foresaw was that the party of the Bosnian Serbs, backed by Slobodan Milosevic, the Serb-nationalist President of Yugoslavia, and led by ruthless extremists such as Karadzic, would soon transform itself into an army of conquest, expulsion, and genocide.

Tuzla actually had a grace period of a few weeks after the war started. Towns and cities throughout eastern Bosnia were being attacked; many quickly succumbed. Tuzla's municipal government, however, called for volunteers, got more than three thousand on the first night, and began to organize the city's defense. Legal and illegal arms were hastily collected; tactics and training were coördinated by the local police; and the nearby units of the Yugoslav Army, which had formidable barracks near the center of town and at the airfield, were given an ultimatum: either support Bosnia or depart for the rump Yugoslavia (which was by then dominated totally by Serbia), leaving behind those arms that rightly belonged to the local authorities. Because Tuzla is a mining center, many of its defenders were miners experienced in the use of explosives, which helped to even the odds somewhat with the Army. Still, when the Army, after pretending to be leaving peacefully for Serbia, suddenly turned and tried to enter central Tuzla, a pitched battle ensued that was, by all accounts, ferocious, and the heavy artillery was all on the Army's side.

Tuzla's defenders nevertheless succeeded in turning back the Army. They also captured more than twelve thousand guns, which were then used to drive the Army north and east, mile by hard-fought mile, in the course of a couple of months. Just as important, the Army abandoned the airfield eight miles south of town—the airfield that is now being used by the American peacekeeping force as its Bosnia headquarters—from which it could have launched devastating aerial attacks. And the city's defenders secured the nearby hills, preventing the rebels from seizing positions that would have allowed them to pour close-range shell and sniper fire into the town. Tuzla was shelled extensively during the war, but always from long distance—a less destructive, demoralizing type of siege than that suffered by, say, Sarajevo.

The importance of the successful defense of Tuzla—the first Bosnian victory of the war—can scarcely be overstated. Without it, the Serb rebels would probably have encountered little organized resistance anywhere in northeastern Bosnia, and might well have won the war in its first year. Bosnia would have been strangled at birth. The irony that Tuzla, with its "soft," social-democratic politics, should have proved to be the country's stoutest polity in the face of armed aggression was lost on no one. All local factions have sought to claim credit for the victory, but the strongest claim belongs to Selim Beslagic, the city's mayor and the chief organizer of its defense. An audiotape even surfaced, a recording, made covertly, of a CB-radio conversation between Beslagic and the vice-commander of the airfield in May, 1992, at the height of the crisis. On the tape, the vice-commander can be clearly heard urging Beslagic to issue a statement opposing Bosnia's independence, and offering to cut him and Tuzla a special deal in a new, non-Bosnian dispensation. And Beslagic can be heard just as clearly replying that he wants no part of the vice-commander's "Serboslavia," and then telling him, in somewhat rougher language, to take a hike.

Tuzla's anti-nationalism, incidentally, does not arise from any pious, picturesque liberalism among its residents; it is not the Vermont of Bosnia. Rather, it is a tough old industrial city, more reminiscent of Manchester, with a tradition of factory-floor radicalism which reaches back at least to the late nineteenth century, when the Hapsburgs ruled Bosnia. "This has always been a rebellious area," Jasminko Arnautovic, a Tuzla writer who also works for the city, told me. Salt has been collected there for almost six thousand years—the Turkish word for salt is *tuz*, and the Ottomans built up a city on the site—"and being the keepers and protectors of salt is something special," Arnautovic says. "It connects you to the ground."

In the post-Communist era, Tuzlans have often been accused by their more ethnically minded neighbors of romanticizing an old-style proletariat, of indulging in "Yugo-nostalgia." But the truth is that the Tito regime exploited Tuzla's workers and natural resources, which include a large coal deposit, much as earlier rulers did, despoiling the city's land and air with crude extractive industry. Tuzla occupies a narrow valley, and what with a huge chemical plant just west of town, pervasive burning of cheap coal, and an inversion layer that settles over the city in winter, its air quality makes Mexico City's pollution look mild. Everyone in Bosnia smokes cigarettes; in Tuzla people say they smoke to protect themselves from breathing the local air straight.

The millennia of salt mining, moreover, have left vast caverns deep beneath the town, causing a steady, disastrous ground subsidence, which over the past decades has destroyed much of the old, intimate city, and forced a majority of Tuzla's residents to move into a scattering of bleak high-rise blocks of flats.

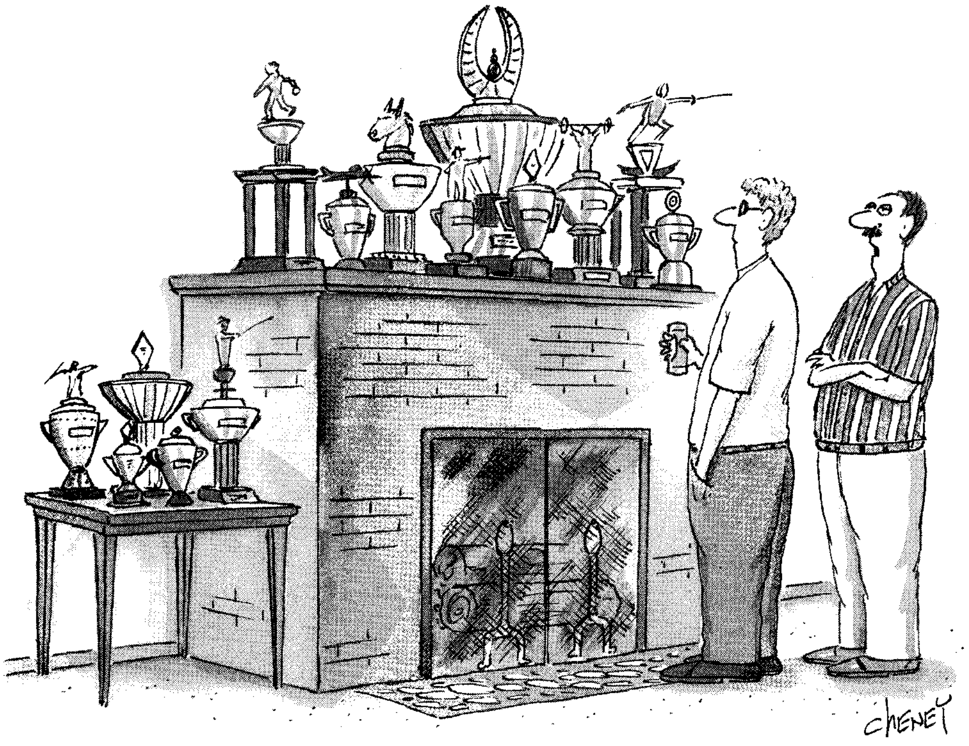
Then, there is the toll taken by the war. Physically, it includes all the scars of shelling, mortar fire, and the gun battles of the defense, plus the neglect of normal maintenance. The psychological costs of the war cannot be easily seen, let alone measured, but the suffering was obviously immense. Tuzla did not starve—U.N. trucks came in with relief supplies, and hunger was general only during the winter of 1993-94, when fighting between the Bosnian Croats and the government's forces cut the city off from the outside world. Still, food prices soared throughout the war, and the black market flourished viciously. At one stage, cigarettes were being sold by the puff. Refugees from "cleansed" regions swamped the city and its hinterland. Tuzla's prewar population was a hundred and thirty thousand; the wartime population of the city and its environs peaked at nine hundred thousand. Exactly one United Nations relief flight, carrying Yasushi Akashi, the Secretary-General's much disparaged special representative to the former Yugoslavia, landed at the Tuzla airfield during the war; that was in March, 1994, and Mr. Akashi promised it would initiate a stream of U.N. relief flights, but none materialized.

In May, 1993, Tuzla was declared one of the U.N.'s six "safe havens," which its enemies would thenceforth attack at their peril. But that did not deter the Serbs from firing a massive shell into a crowded square in the Old City on the evening of May 25, 1995. Some months earlier, another Serb shell had hit close by, so Tuzlans knew that the distant gunners had precise coördinates for the square. Outdoor gatherings had been prohibited by the police. But Tuzla's young people, with no money to meet inside cafés, and with a long tradition of gathering on nice summer evenings in the square—actually just a cobbled open space where eight streets converge—had ignored the police order. Seventy-two were killed, and more than two hundred were maimed and wounded. Tuzla, even now, is not a big city: you can scarcely find anyone there who didn't lose a friend or a family member that night.

While some of the city's factories managed to stay open throughout the war, production plummeted, unemployment soared, and today Suhreta Ramic, the local representative of UNICEF, calculates that fewer than ten per cent of the people in Tuzla have the means to lead what was considered a "normal life" before the war, and that more than half the population is still dependent in some way on humanitarian aid. The hundreds of thousands of displaced people still living in and around Tuzla are the neediest, naturally. Nearly all are Muslims, "cleansed" from their towns and villages to the east and north. With the signing of the United States-sponsored Dayton Peace Agreement, in December, their chances of returning to their homes, while officially assured by provisions in the agreement, were effectively dashed: the self-styled Serb Republic, an "entity" built on Nazi-type theories of race and violently dedicated to ethnic "purity," has now been internationally legitimatized, and most of the Muslim refugees' homes are deep within its territory.

The refugees have transformed Tuzla, including its politics. The great majority are conservative villagers, harboring deep anger against the "Chetniks" (the name taken by Serb partisans in the Second World War, which is now widely used in Bosnia to deride the rebels, their supporters, and Serbs in general) and no little resentment of the relatively comfortable and unscathed Tuzlans among whom they live. The refugees tend to support the Party of Democratic Action (known by its Serbo-Croatian initials, S.D.A.), which is the Muslim-nationalist ruling party. A cantonal government recently established by Sarajevo for Tuzla and its hinterland is already firmly under S.D.A. control, and if local elections are held in 1996, as the Dayton agreement foresees, they will almost surely spell the end of the social-democratic, anti-nationalist coalition government of Selim Beslagic in Tuzla. In the meantime, Beslagic is battling to preserve, among other things, the property rights of Serbs who fled Tuzla during the war and whose homes are coveted by the many refugees without permanent places to live.

There was no ethnic conflict in Tuzla during the war, no suggestion that the city might, like Sarajevo and Mostar, ever



"Those? Oh, just a few souvenirs from my bipolar-disorder days."

need to be divided. Most of the city's Serbs did flee, it is true, either to Serbia or overseas, many driven by hunger and want and ordinary war fear; others' fears were fanned by the extreme propaganda pouring out of Belgrade before the war and at its beginning, which warned of the Muslims' genocidal designs. But those who stayed, many of them in mixed marriages, laugh at the suggestion that their religion might cause them to be mistreated in Tuzla—at least, they laughed whenever I asked about it. The city's Orthodox church was shelled during the war, and Beslagic's government helped with repairs. I attended a service there on Orthodox Christmas (January 7th) and found the place crowded with worshippers, young and old. Tuzlans still joke about the "news," reported on Belgrade TV, that Tuzla's Orthodox church had been destroyed, and that the Jala River, which runs through the city, was jammed with Serb corpses. The Jala is a modest stream; two dead goats might dam it. During the war, when public transportation began to break down, Tuzlans used to tell their employers, "No problem. I'll just ride a body down the Jala."

NEW YEAR'S is still a universal holiday in what's left of Bosnia and Herzegovina: that is to say, everybody celebrates it. This year, with the ceasefire holding and NATO troops arriving, people seemed to celebrate with a special intensity. In Tuzla, firecrackers and gunfire started rattling even before dark on New Year's Eve. I had been invited to a party by a young English-speaking soldier named Dino Miskovic, who was on leave for the holiday, but when he picked me up at my hotel he announced a change of venue. He said that "the flats"—meaning the big apartment blocks where most Tuzlans live—were becoming too dangerous. Celebratory gunfire might come through the walls and floors and ceilings. So we were going to a party at a farmhouse. We stopped to pick up Dino's girlfriend, Zvijezdana, at her parents' flat (American gangsta rap was pounding on the stereo there), and then set off for the countryside on foot.

Dino and Zvijezdana were a typical Tuzla couple, I discovered as we walked. That is, she was half Serb, half Croat, and he was half Croat, half Muslim. Echoing Haris and Aleksandra, they assured me that it was no big deal. (Indeed, I later shared a brandy with Dino's mother, Safeta—she is a Muslim economist, and still reveres Tito and the peace and relative prosperity he presided over—while she explained the significance of the Christmas tree that she and her husband, a miner, display each year in their immaculate flat. They put it up for the Catholic, or Croat, Christmas, and keep it up through the Orthodox, or Serb, Christmas, in order to honor both traditions. This was not an uncommon practice among Bosnia's Muslims, she said—at least, not in Tuzla. It also helped keep the children happy, since they had picked up, from TV and elsewhere, some of the fierce Western commercialization of Christmas.) We walked past smoky, raucous high-rise blocks, along dark roads, through broad, muddy fields, then up a long hill past farmhouses and orchards. We were slowly rising out of Tuzla's fogbound valley into winter moonlight. As we climbed, Dino said, indicating a snowy hillside of brush and stumps, "This was a deep forest. When there was no electricity, everyone from Tuzla climbed up here and cut down the trees for firewood."

I asked Zvijezdana if she had been among the woodcutters.

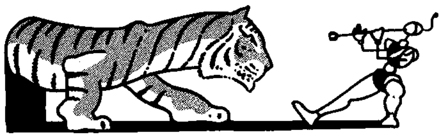
She snorted.

"Her father was," Dino said. "She is lazy."

Every now and then, Dino cocked an ear to a blast in the distance and said, "That was hard. A cannon." Once, he said, "That was the front. It is the first time we've heard heavy weapons in a month. Zvijezdana's father's at the front, twenty kilometres from here. Maybe the war is starting again."

Zvijezdana seemed more concerned about the deepening mud and its effect on her dancing shoes than about a resumption of war. Noticing that I was walking carefully, too, Dino said, "Don't worry. The girls at the party will clean our shoes when we get there."

He was wrong. When we arrived, the party was going full blast—a dozen young people dancing, drinking, eating from a groaning board, and bellowing Bosnian folk songs in a small, smoky hut decorated with colored lights and heated by a wood-burning stove—and no one seemed at all interested in the shoes we left on the porch.



A minimum of fuss was made over the American visitor. One beefy blond teen-ager in a baggy football jersey did inform me that the future of Bosnia was now entirely in the hands of the Americans, so if America, as the world's strongest country, decreed peace there would be peace, and if it decreed war there would be war. That was about the extent of the evening's political discussion. There were, of course, endlessly complex ethnic undercurrents. Songs were identified for me as Croatian ballads, Serbian love songs, Muslim laments, or Bosnian anthems, and everybody seemed to know every word of all of them. A Muslim kid with a pale face and deep-set eyes under fierce black brows abruptly grabbed the cross hanging around the neck of a Croatian boy, then ostentatiously kissed it while the Croat smirked. Dino had brought a tape by his favorite group, the Cure, and everyone sang along with it, too, but it was less popular than the Balkan music. I tried to learn some folk-dance steps, and when I half mastered one I was told, "Now you are a Bosnian boy!"

For me, things got less jovial just before midnight, when two hand grenades appeared. As the elder of the party, I sternly confiscated the weapons and hid them—cleverly, I thought—on top of an armoire. But then the grenades reappeared at midnight, and Dino and I were outnumbered and outmaneuvered by the pro-detonation crowd. Our host, a dapper, mischievous red-faced boy of about eighteen, pulled the pin on one; the kid in the football jersey pulled the pin on the other. The rest of us backed away, suddenly sober, though there was actually nowhere to go in the tiny, crowded room. The boys danced intently for a minute or so with their grenades, keeping the safety levers clenched, then tramped out onto the porch and hurled them gleefully into the darkness, where they blew major holes in the night.

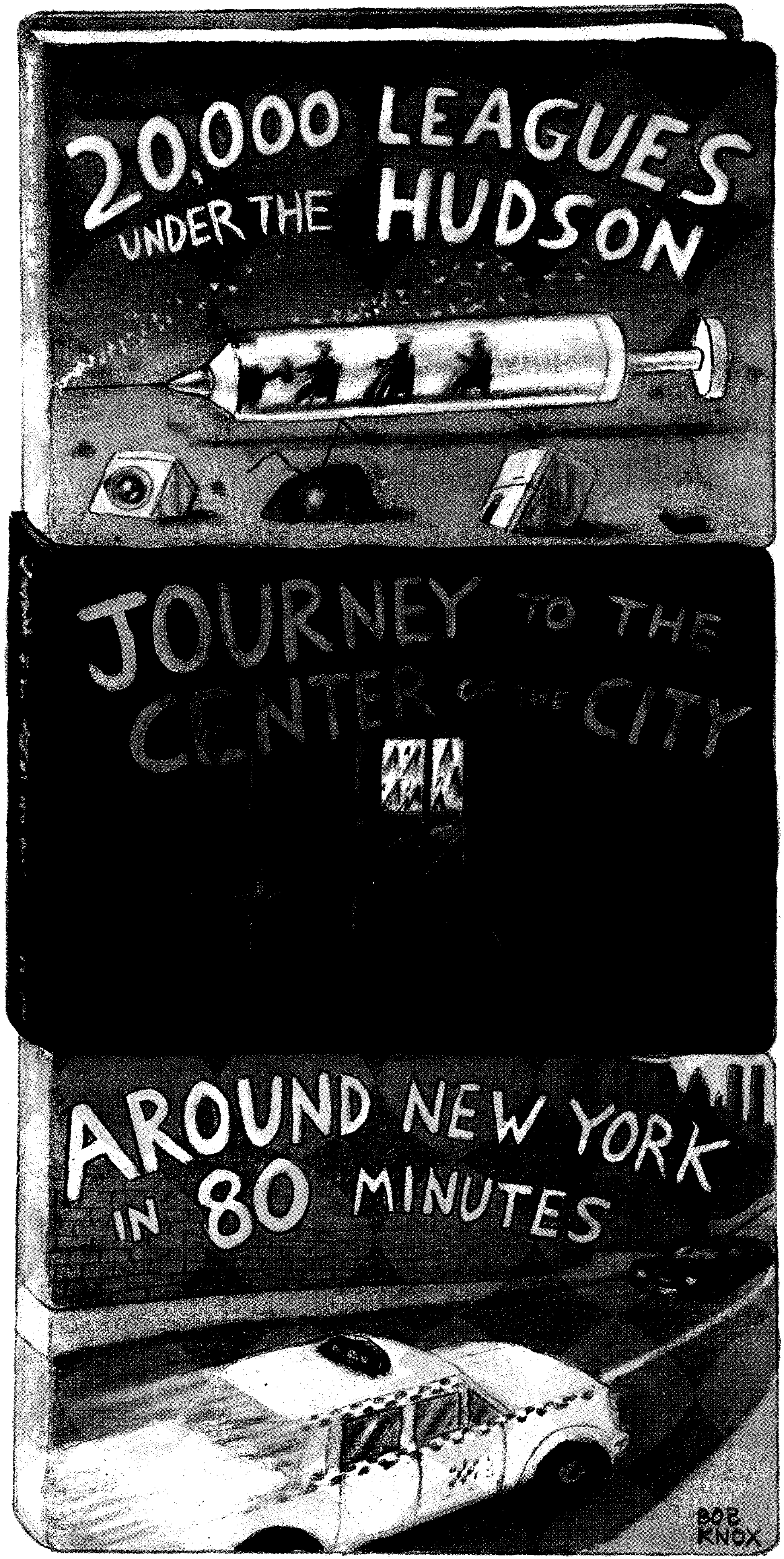
Several hours and another thousand plum brandies later, I set off for Tuzla alone. The others were planning to party till noon; though I felt immortal, I was ready to sleep. Gunfire still rattled from the blocks of flats as I descended the now frozen road into the shrouded city.

Alija Izetbegovic, the President of Bosnia, apparently scolded those who celebrated so wildly on New Year's, after all the recent death and suffering. I didn't actually hear what he said, but I did hear plenty of Tuzlans grumbling that he was an old spoilsport. I talked the question over with a young soldier named Muris Djug. "What you need to understand here is how happy everyone is simply to have survived," he said. Muris, I knew, had narrowly escaped death in the May 25th massacre, having left the square only moments before the shell hit. His brother, who remained behind in the square, had been injured. (For that matter, Dino's brother was also injured and has had two operations on his stomach so far.) Muris, moreover, had survived many months on the front line, and that is where he was on November 21st, the day the Dayton Peace Agreement was announced.

"The Serbs were so happy that day," he recalled. "I knew some of them quite well, because our trenches were at one point only thirty metres apart, and we used to shout across, especially at night. Those guys had it much worse than we did. Some of them hadn't been out of the trenches for two months. I don't think you can imagine what that means. We were relieved every five or six days, and that was bad enough. Also, we were starting to win the war. So they were very happy about the ceasefire. They celebrated with tracer bullets—everything. I was also happy, because I am from Tuzla, and I knew that this meant I could go back to my studies, to my girlfriend and my family, to the swim team I coach. But I didn't celebrate, out of respect for the other boys in my trench. One was from Zvornik, another from Vlasenica"—Serb-held territory. "I pray they'll be able to go home now, but I doubt it. The Chetniks won't let them. For that reason, our commander told us we had nothing to celebrate."

No one with an interest in the survival of Bosnia as a country could find much to celebrate in the Dayton agreement. In the field, the government's forces, with the help of their erstwhile foes the Bosnian Croats and of the Croatian Army itself, were, for the first time in the war, consistently defeating the Serbs. The decision to call off the offensive in October was militarily questionable. Indeed, it seemed to be dictated primarily by pressures from the govern-

JULES VERNE REDUX


20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE HUDSON
JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE CITY
AROUND NEW YORK IN 80 MINUTES
BOB KNOX

WEAR
INFO
MSTEVENS

"Attention, shoppers. We have a lost boomer at the information desk."

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ment's main international ally, the United States: President Clinton, in order to win his struggle with Congress over Bosnia policy, needed quick results from the manic diplomatic initiative being run by Richard Holbrooke.

The agreement itself pulverizes the idea of a unitary Bosnia. It creates an exceedingly weak central state, without even the basic mechanisms of control over its own territory, such as a single, integrated army. By acknowledging the Serb Republic, the agreement effectively partitions the country. Even if rebel leaders like Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic are arrested and tried for war crimes, the racist statelet they built by mass murder will survive. Although the Muslims (and non-Muslims still loyal to the Sarajevo government) and Croats are ostensibly partners in the "entity" now known as the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the long-term commitment of the Croat leadership is plainly not to strengthening Bosnia but to folding its territory into a Greater Croatia.

Economically, too, this divided Bosnia is a non-starter. The Serb Republic, in particular, is a hopeless concoction—depopulated and largely rural, with a tiny new élite of war profiteers and relatively few educated people left around. Amputated from the rest of Bosnia by its politicians, the Serb Republic's economy makes little sense. It has, for instance, the majority of the region's iron deposits, but the means of processing iron are all in the Federation. Serbia itself, meanwhile, its economy broken by sanctions, is not in a position to help its impoverished, self-mutilated stepchild.

The basic problem of the Dayton agreement's approach to Bosnia is its assumption that the nationalist parties—or their "motherland" representatives, President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia and the arch-nationalist President of Croatia, Franjo Tudjman—represent the interests of the people of Bosnia. They do not. They simply have power, and are therefore men who the United States and its allies can do business with. Ethnically defined states and parties are inherently inimical to democracy and to the protection of human rights—the West's putative goals for stable successor states to the former Yugoslavia. The Clinton Administration's plan to strengthen the Bosnian military, while justifiable in terms of the regional balance of power, will also work inevitably against the development of multiparty politics in Bosnia, where the Army, already the country's largest employer and most powerful institution, is closely identified with the Muslim-nationalist ruling party.

Even so, the Dayton agreement, followed by the NATO intervention, has already brought Bosnia the most desperately needed development of all: a ceasefire. This may be only what the historian Ivo Banac has called a "centaurian peace"—monstrous, half human—but, certainly, no civil society can begin to be rebuilt in wartime. If the forces under NATO (properly known as IFOR, an acronym for Implementation Force, because they include non-NATO troops) stay only a year, as is currently planned, the chances of a lasting peace are slight. The war parties will still be in power, the rage they thrive on still fresh. Moreover, the economic incentive to return to war will still be there for all those who have learned how to make fear, hatred, shortages, and bloodshed work for them.

And yet at the moment the armies are separated, with many soldiers being demobilized. And those who have survived must indeed count themselves lucky.

"I'M more worried about the Croats than about the Serbs," Haris said. "The Serbs are like us—they're tired, beat up, they feel they lost the war. But the Croats think they won, and they did."

We were sitting in Haris's bar, a handsome little place of polished wood and frosted windows in the Old City. It was a quiet evening: there were just a couple of players on the electronic dartboard. "Look at Mostar," Haris said. Tensions were high in Mostar, where Croats and Muslims faced each other across a river. "The Croats there are being real hard-asses."

I had been asking Haris about his life since he was released by the Serbs, and he had surprised me by expressing no particular enmity toward them. "Look, every side has its extremists," he said. "With the Serbs, it might be forty per cent. With the Croats, maybe fifteen. With the Muslims, maybe five. At least, that's how it looks to me. But those few extremists are enough to get things started, and before it's over everybody's involved. I know it was hard for my father to accept. The day after I got out, he sat me down and asked me, 'What did you do? It must have been *something*.' And I told him, 'Dad, I had a Muslim name. That was it.' You know, he couldn't believe it, having grown up in Yugoslavia. So I could see, even after everything that had happened, that he was still waiting to hear it from me. And it was like the last drop of water in a full glass. He finally had to face it."

The Hurems' story is not really typical of the Bosnian Muslim experience in the war. They have survived, for a start, and have landed on their feet in Tuzla. Zihno has even found work in his field, hydro engineering, with a Scottish aid project. All the same, I was struck by Haris's sturdy indifference to the idea of himself as a victim. "You know, when I first got out I wasn't sure what to do," he said. "I didn't have to go in the Army, because I'd already been a prisoner of war. So I just volunteered for a while, in the mountains near Sarajevo. And one day I was helping unload bodies from a truck. They were soldiers killed on Mt. Igman, about thirty of them. And this old man was helping me. I'd grab the arms, he'd grab the legs. Then, suddenly, he let go of this guy, and he just stood there staring at him. I asked what was wrong, and he said, 'This is my son.' Then, after a minute, he picked up the legs, and we went back to work. That old man showed me what it is to be strong."

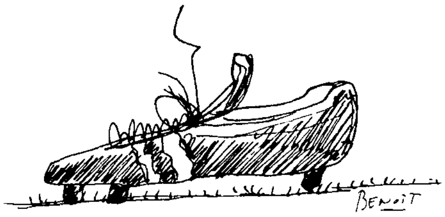
Haris has an easy, pithy way of telling a story. He went for six years to the American School in Tripoli, where Zihno was working on a giant construction project, so his English is not the mid-Atlantic concoction you usually hear in Europe but instead carries echoes of a soft Texas twang. He even turns his mouth down, Western style, when he bites off a sentence to make a point. In his description of the last, tense days before his release by the Serbs, he told me about a confrontation with one of his captors, who had brought him to a house near what turned out to be the prisoner-exchange point. Haris had no idea what was planned, and thought he was about to be killed. The Serb offered him a drink. "I said, 'No, thanks,' " Haris told me. "He got upset. He wanted to know what I was afraid of, and said something about me being a Muslim. And I told him no, it wasn't that. 'I'm just in kind of a situation here,' I said, 'so I don't really feel like a drink.' " Haris turned his mouth down, gave me a faintly amused but really fathomless look, then seemed to shake off the memory, and sipped his beer.

After coming to Tuzla, he landed a job as a driver and interpreter for a Dutch branch of Médecins Sans Frontières. He kept the job even after he got the bar running. "Here you need to have a few things going," he told me. "At home in Sarajevo, even while I was a student I had a café, and my family had a little basement factory making 'Italian' socks. I'm going to start making those socks again as soon as I can get the machines."

Haris met Aleksandra in the operating room at a Tuzla hospital. He was working as an interpreter for foreign surgeons. She had been volunteering there since the beginning of the war, which happened to come just as she was finishing high school. She accused Haris, mock-seriously, of trying to impersonate a foreigner, with his fluent English behind his surgical mask. He saw her in town a few nights later, when he had been drinking, which gave him the courage to ask for a date.

Now—if the war is really over—Haris wants to move back to Sarajevo, but Aleksandra is dubious, and on his first visit back since the siege was lifted he himself was shocked, not just by the physical destruction but by the city's social transformation. "I went walking in Bascarsija, the Old City," he told me. "It used to be that if I walked there an hour I would see two hundred people I knew. This time, I saw maybe two. All my friends are dead, wounded, overseas, or on the other side. The city is full of people, but they're all refugees, country people." Aleksandra fears that in Sarajevo people who have lost their homes and families will notice her Serb-sounding first name and irrationally blame her. Haris points out that there are just as many embittered Muslim refugees in Tuzla as in Sarajevo. But, Aleksandra replies, in Tuzla she is at least known. Zihno, for his part, pronounces his oldest son "very lucky" to have married "an absolutely lovely girl."

On this evening, Haris and I are joined first by Aleksandra and then by a couple of his former colleagues—a British nurse, female, and a Dutch logistics specialist, male—from Médecins Sans Frontières. Haris and the nurse start trading stories about a certain alcoholic doctor in a village clinic near the front line east of Tuzla, and about all the close scrapes they had on the road to his clinic: the shells exploding around them; the time the M.S.F. van got riddled with bullets from a Browning machine gun and Haris, unhurt, never even hit the brakes. Earlier, Haris had told me that he sometimes carried either a pistol (and fifty bullets) or a grenade when he drove near the front. "I decided that they weren't going to take me prisoner again, that I'd kill myself first, and maybe try to take a few Serbs with me," he said. Then he added quietly, "Just because I know how things run on the other side when you're caught."



Again, I'm struck by the lack of rancor with which Haris talks about the Serb gunners who fired on him, a noncombatant, while he drove for M.S.F. "This one guy, he could have killed me so easy," he says. "He shot up the road in front of me to stop me, then in back of me, so I couldn't back up. He was just having fun. He was probably bored. If I were him, I would have done the same thing."

"You would, would you?" the nurse asks dryly.

I once asked Haris if his experience with M.S.F., which included plenty of on-the-job first-aid training, might inspire him to become a doctor himself. He said no, and gave me a crooked grin. "I'm an economist," he said. "Wherever the money is, that's where I want to be."

Now his former colleagues start kidding him about his recent decision to leave M.S.F., after two and a half years with them—to start driving and interpreting, at substantially better pay, for one of the American news organizations that have flocked into Tuzla since it became the headquarters of the American forces.

The conversation is shattered suddenly by a long burst of automatic gunfire, seemingly just outside the frosted windows. There are two bursts, actually, with a slight pause between them, and when the second burst ends Haris says casually, "That's thirty. It's a Kalashnikov, so he has to reload."

We quickly finish our beers and put on our coats. Haris opens the front door, pokes his head out, and studies the street in both directions. No gunman. He gives his crooked grin, then nods to Aleksandra and the nurse to step out. "Women first," he says. "Then children. This is Bosnia."

WHEN the Tuzlans heard that the Americans were coming, many had visions of twenty thousand free-spending G.I.s filling the town with dollars. (And drugs, and AIDS: there was a series of small local panics.) But, aside from the few hundred drivers, interpreters, and fixers working with the foreign news crews and IFOR, and the owners of shops and restaurants near the airfield, almost no one in Tuzla has yet reaped any financial gain from the United States presence. Indeed, very few Tuzlans have seen a G.I. The Americans, unlike their European (previously U.N., now IFOR) counterparts, are restricted to their bases when off duty, apparently out of concern for their safety, and in Tuzla that means the airfield, many miles from town. A U.S. military spokesman told me they might eventually run some special bus tours, to give troops a look at the city, and General William Nash, the commander of Task Force Eagle, as the Tuzla-based mission is called, said that the supercautious fraternization policy might be reconsidered "as the theatre matures." But for now the G.I.s are reduced to asking reporters who visit the airfield whether the women in Tuzla are really as pretty as they've heard. When President Clinton visited Tuzla, in mid-January, he went no farther than the airfield.

Of course, IFOR's task is not to stimulate local commerce or facilitate romance but to carry out the terms of the peace agreement, and that will be done mainly from within armored fighting vehicles, along the front lines. A four-kilometre-wide Zone of Separation between the opposing armies will be strictly enforced. Heavy weapons will be withdrawn to barracks, prisoners of war released, civilian militias disarmed and disbanded. IFOR units will patrol the countryside, maintain checkpoints along the roads, and use aerial and ground reconnaissance to monitor artillery and troop concentrations. They will also begin the immense task of removing untold millions of land mines. Finally, unlike their U.N. predecessors, they will have broad latitude to respond with lethal force to attacks or provocations.

This well-delineated mission became murky almost immediately, as the Serbs began to test its provisions, demanding delays in the schedule for their withdrawal from certain Sarajevo suburbs, continuing to impede movement on roads they controlled, and so on. In early January, I watched William Perry, our Secretary of Defense, give a performance at the Tuzla airfield that was worthy of Yasushi Akashi, the U.N.'s fainthearted former chief in Bosnia. After being asked about the fate of sixteen civilians illegally seized by the Bosnian Serbs near Sarajevo, Perry, in effect, threw up his hands, then tried to shift the responsibility for dealing with such blatant violations of the Dayton agreement to an international police force, which he admitted had not yet been deployed. Over the days that followed, Perry's terror of "mission creep" seemed to recede, though, to the point where, after the *Times* reported that the Serbs were working around the clock to bury evidence of large-scale civilian massacres in open-pit mines, he suggested that IFOR might eventually provide security escorts for war-crimes investigators seeking to preserve such evidence.

THERE was a night club in Tuzla that interested me. It was in the basement of the Hotel Tuzla, a grimy high-rise monstrosity of the Communist era, and it reeked of new, war-related money: it was dark and low-ceilinged, with overpriced drinks and everything in deep-red imitation velvet. One of this night club's owners (or perhaps he is only the chief of security; it depends on whom you ask) is Naser Oric. Oric was the commander of the defense of Srebrenica, the refugee-jammed town in eastern Bosnia (another of the U.N.'s "safe havens") that, after a desperate three-year siege, finally fell to a Serb offensive last July. It is generally believed that as many as eight thousand men were massacred, on the direct orders of General Ratko Mladic, after Srebrenica fell. Tens of thousands of civilians were expelled, and many of them fled over the mountains on foot toward Tuzla. Oric and his forces could not help them—they had been withdrawn several weeks before, by the Bosnian High Command. One story goes that Oric went three times to his superiors in Tuzla, pleading to be allowed to fight his way back into Srebrenica before it fell, and was three times refused.

I wanted to ask him about that story, and, for that reason, I went several times to his night club around midnight, when he could be counted on to show up. I also wanted to ask him about the rumors that he might be the first Muslim to be indicted by the International War Crimes Tribunal, in The Hague.

Oric, who is a powerfully built, surprisingly young man, politely declined to talk to me each time we met, saying that he was waiting for permission from his superiors to do so. Actually, I had some difficulty hanging on to interpreters once they learned who I was hoping to interview at midnight. One man, who came highly recommended, and who had assured me that the wartime curfew still in force in Tuzla did not apply to him, blanched when he heard Oric's name, then stammered, "I cannot do it. I have a Serb last name, and he is a very, very dangerous man." Haris, hearing of my troubles, agreed to help. He knew Oric, he said, and was not afraid of him, and he accompanied me twice to Oric's club. But Oric still refused to talk.

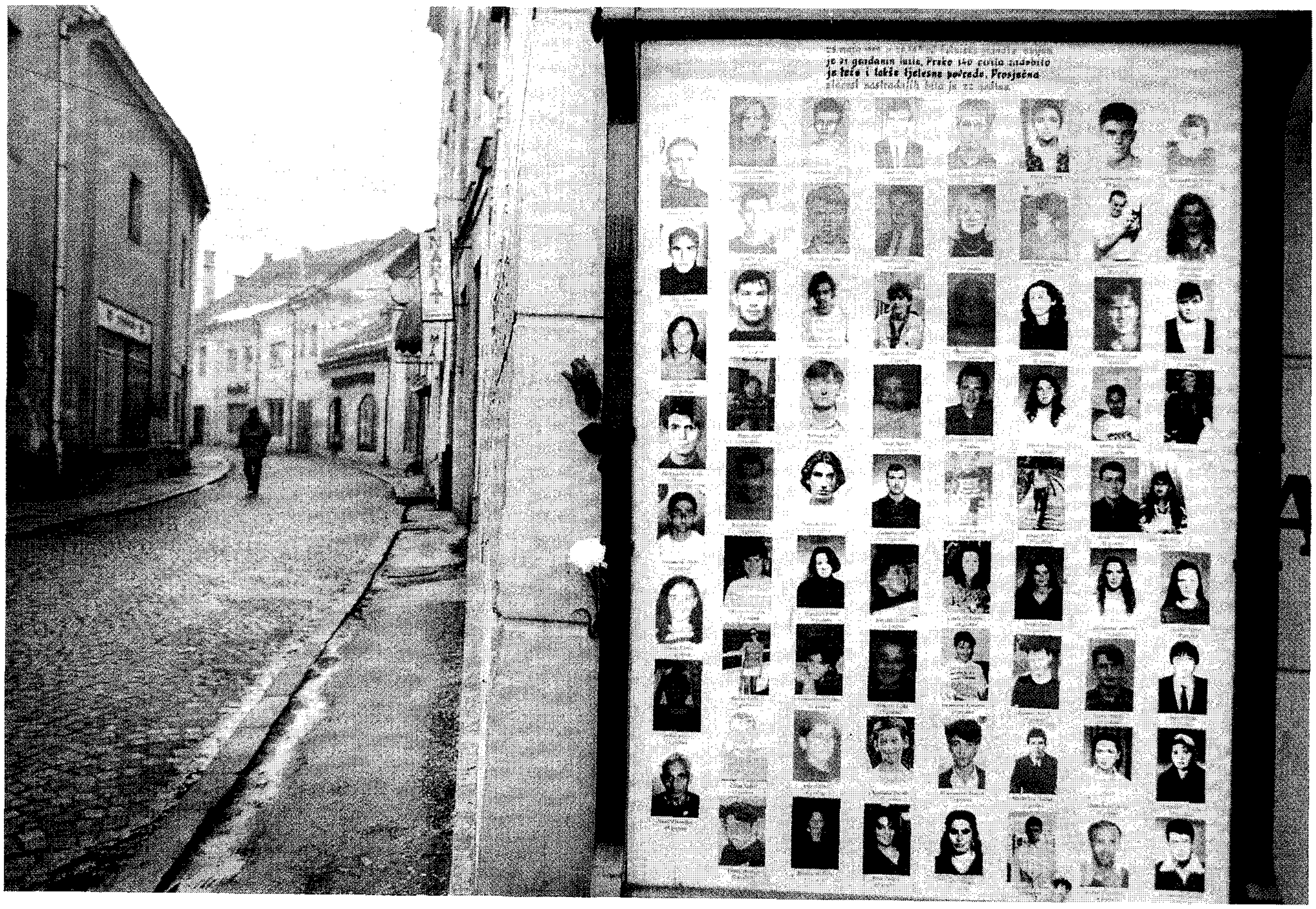
A number of people in Tuzla, though, including Zlatko Berbic, the owner of a popular radio station called Radio Kameleon, told me that Oric had already announced that if the Hague Tribunal charged him he would voluntarily go there to stand trial. He apparently wanted to tell his story, wanted to explain what had happened at Srebrenica. (During the siege, Oric showed a videotape of burned Serb houses and headless Serb corpses to a Washington *Post* reporter; he presumably has a less graphic presentation in mind for The Hague.) If his military methods, which were undoubtedly brutal, were judged to be war crimes, he'd said, he would accept his sentence. But he wanted the world to know what the Serbs had done there, what the U.N. had (and had not) done there, what his superiors in Sarajevo had (and had not) done there, and why he had done what he did.

I was fascinated by Oric's status in and around Tuzla. Many people, particularly refugees—and including Haris Hurem—consider him a war hero. One group from Srebrenica, now living in Italy, is reported to have bought him, out of gratitude, a white Mercedes-Benz, which you see him driving around town. But other Tuzlans, including members of Beslagic's coalition, regard Oric and his ilk as part of Bosnia's problem. "He is just a big Muslim, a killer," one young man, a

Muslim himself but an anti-nationalist, told me. The only war hero from Srebrenica, he said, was the doctor who stayed there throughout the war, working alone in terrible conditions. (The government tried to fly in two more doctors, but their helicopter was shot down by the Serbs and both were killed.) About the thousands of refugees from Srebrenica and elsewhere now living in Tuzla, this young man was blunt. "We hate them," he said. "They are village people, and they are destroying our city."

Paradoxically, what he meant was that the urban culture of ethnic tolerance and social-democratic politics was under threat. But the strained relations between city and country cut several ways. Jasminko Arnautovic, the writer, told me that during the worst parts of the war his stepmother used to rise before dawn, gather up her most valuable possessions—things that had been in her family for generations—in a sack, and catch an open truck out to the countryside near Kalesjia, a town fifteen miles away. There, along with other Tuzlans in similar straits, she would spread a plastic sheet out in a muddy field and display her precious heirlooms for local peasants to pick over. "Because the peasants had food, and we had none," Arnautovic said simply. Another Tuzla intellectual told me that her sister had been offered, in exchange for the most beautiful, most expensive suit of clothes she owned, a kilo of beans, a jar of sour cream, and a jar of jam.

Muris Djug, the soldier who was at the front on the day the Dayton agreement was announced, and whose family has been in Tuzla for centuries, grimaced when I mentioned the young anti-nationalist's remark about hating villagers. "Some Tuzla people do not understand what those from the countryside have suffered," he said delicately. "They only see that they are poor and primitive, and don't know how to act in town. But when people from the villages, where every boy either was killed or became a soldier, come here and see these boys whose families have arranged for them to work as policemen, or have found some other way to keep them out of the Army, they are angry. Some Tuzlans who sit in their cafés and sneer don't understand what they're sneering at."



A memorial to the seventy-two people who died on a spring evening last year when a Serb shell hit a crowded square in Tuzla's old city.

MAGNUM PHOTOS INC.

THE 1991 census registered a population of 4.3 million Bosnians. More than half—as many as 2.5 million—have been driven from their homes. During the winter of 1993-94, Tuzla's sprawling sports center, along with many other public facilities, was given over completely to emergency housing. Today, most of the displaced are in private accommodations. This doesn't mean that people have remade their lives, or that things around Tuzla have returned to normal. It means only that the displaced have become a less dramatic presence to the outside eye, and that all available housing is jammed to the rafters with extended families and disoriented peasants.

When I set out to interview displaced people, I found them everywhere—and to me they looked exactly like Tuzlans. They told unbearable stories, of murder and expulsion and hunger and flight. Some had been driven from their villages years before, in the first weeks of the war. Some had lost their families. Some still hoped to go home again. Many had given up that hope. Some had survived Srebrenica. One man I interviewed had fought under Naser Oric for two and a half years and had been wounded twice, but he would not discuss the details of his military service. He did tell me about the march out of Srebrenica, and about the many men lost along the way, and about how the Chetniks mutilated their bodies. He was twenty-three years old, he said, and he looked, to my eye, utterly lost.

I headed east to Kalesjia, near the front line, which had been completely destroyed by fighting. On the road from Sarajevo to Tuzla, I had passed through many burned-out villages, seen the roofless houses standing at the ends of neat driveways, with maybe a wrecked, snow-covered family car on its side in the garden. These were scenes of fierce, small-scale, almost domestic violence. Kalesjia was another matter. The Bosnian Serbs had taken it early in the war, but the government had quickly retaken it, as part of the push out of Tuzla, and then the Serbs had shelled it relentlessly from the hills they held to the south. It had been a fair-sized town, with factories and blocks of flats, but there didn't seem to be an unscarred piece of masonry, let alone a pane of glass, left. Confronted with such a scene, the stunned eye scans stupidly for any shard of normalcy—a plastic flower box still strapped to a balcony railing, say. When my driver pointed out the hill with the Serb artillery position, I thought it looked like a good spot for a ski resort.

But when I asked him to proceed to the front, which was less than a mile away, he balked. I wanted to test the border, to see if we would be allowed to pass, in accordance with the peace agreement, and maybe interview some Serb soldiers while we were at it. The driver said the road beyond Kalesjia was mined. I knew that an IFOR convoy had passed down it the day before, without incident, but he was clearly too frightened to go on. Where I saw a shattered yet peaceful countryside—children in bright jackets sledding, sleepy-looking soldiers driving horse carts filled with freshly cut logs—he saw mortal peril. We turned back.

The former mayor of Kalesjia was the governor of the new canton that encompassed Tuzla. I later interviewed him in his office, in Tuzla. A ponderous man named Izet Hadzic, he took for himself rather more credit for the liberation of Kalesjia from the Serbs than anyone else around Tuzla seemed inclined to give him. He is, in fact, widely resented in the city, as a simple rural politician whom the central government in Sarajevo has seen fit to put in charge of a regional structure that is stripping away Tuzla's autonomy. With me, Governor Hadzic criticized what he called the "naïve-society option" of the local anti-nationalists, and said that, in any case, Tuzla had always been unduly influenced by Belgrade, the capital of Serbia.

That remark reminded me of a story that Zlatko Berbic, of Radio Kameleon, tells. It seems that a famous Belgrade dissident, an elderly professor named Miladin Zivotic, best known for a ritual he maintained throughout the war—lighting a peace candle each day outside the Presidential palace of Slobodan Milosevic—came to Tuzla at the height of the war to apologize, in the name of normal Serbs, for his government's aggression against Bosnia. Naturally, Berbic let Professor Zivotic use Radio Kameleon to deliver his message. Afterward, however, Hadzic went on another station and denounced Radio Kameleon for giving airtime to Chetniks. At a meeting of the cantonal assembly there was talk of a Serb plot "named Kameleon," and, according to the radio station's managers, a vigorous campaign of official harassment ensued.

Baisa Baki, a Tuzla actress, is trying to raise money for a production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream." It's a difficult task, she says, not only because there isn't, to put it mildly, much money around but also because of a prevailing, semi-official view that everything in the performing arts in Bosnia these days must be political and relevant to the war. "I have begun to hate how our performers and our playwrights just make money from people's fears and pain," she told me intently. We were nursing espressos in a downtown café. "During the war, all you could think about was leaving," she said. "Here you were just a walking target. Sooner or later, you felt, a shell would find you. But now that the war may really be over, it's hard to know what to do. Do you leave our beautiful Bosnia now, after everything we've been through, and just go be a refugee someplace—a nobody, fighting for nothing but survival? Is there still a Bosnia to fight for? And, even if there is, won't a generation now be sacrificed to patriotism, to nationalism? Many of us could end up in jail or worse. It's happened before."

HARIS had to drive to Orasje, the Bosnian border town, on the Sava River, where the Americans were coming in from Croatia. CNN, his new employer, was sending people and equipment from Zagreb to the Sava. Haris would be picking them up. Because the Americans were using the road from Orasje to Tuzla to bring their forces south, it was now presumably safe, and, in fact, Haris had already made the trip once or twice. But he had found it nerve-racking. The route ran straight across the Posavina Corridor, a thin east-west strip that connects all the Serb-held lands of western Bosnia with the Serb-held lands of eastern Bosnia, and with Mother Serbia. Many people believed that, in a sense, the whole war had been over Posavina. Certainly it had seen some of the worst, most concentrated fighting, and had been a main bone of contention at Dayton. Now the Serbs were going to be allowed to keep Posavina, and the Bosnians were not happy about it.

I was feeling ready to leave Tuzla, and decided to hitch a lift with Haris. We left on a wet, cold, misty morning. Dz'ordz'e Ristic, another driver/interpreter—known professionally as George—was with us. George and Haris were concerned about the fact that CNN's van had Croatian license plates. For reasons I never understood, the plates, they said, might arouse Serb suspicions. Under the peace agreement, there were not supposed to be any military checkpoints along this road, except those manned by IFOR, but this was some of the most lawless territory in Bosnia, and George and Haris muttered that anything—absolutely anything—could happen. Zipping along through the snow and fog, we saw a pleasing number of American tanks, Humvees, and Bradley Fighting Vehicles parked in clearings and alongside crossroads and grinding past us in the other direction. A Beethoven symphony played on the tape deck.

"Watch George when we cross into Serb territory," Haris told me. "He will jump out and kiss the ground. He can't help it. He is already smiling."

George was a Serb. When the war broke out, he was in Tuzla, where he had lived since he was a child, and his parents, who had moved to Serbia, were frantic. But then they saw some of the more outlandish propaganda on Belgrade TV about what was being done to Serbs in areas around Tuzla they happened to know well, "and they realized that it was all bullshit," George said. George had served in the Bosnian Army, and had married a Muslim. "You watch Haris if the Serbs stop us," he told me. "He knows more Chetnik songs than I do, and he'll sing every one if they ask."

Haris confirmed that he was a walking anthology of Serb folk music. "I learned all their songs in the camp," he said. "It was good. It empties you to sing. They used to scream at us, 'Sing louder!' And they used to make me step out of the line and sing alone. I didn't care about the words. You feel better afterward. It's better to sing than to be beaten up."

The countryside began to flatten out. Traffic thinned. The few buildings we could see now were all shell-damaged. We came to a Bosnian police checkpoint, and were waved through.

"Posavina," Haris said quietly.

It was a landscape from the First World War: There wasn't a tree that hadn't been split or felled by a shell. Heavy log bunkers showed up as lumps in the snow. "The Chetnik front line," Haris said. "Our front line was just over there." He pointed into the fog. The road was pocked by deep shell and mortar holes. George, who was driving, picked his way silently between them. Then, in a small patch of standing woods, a group of Serb soldiers suddenly appeared, standing in the road, signalling us to stop. George stopped. He rolled down his window.

The Serbs said nothing. They studied our Croatian plates. They took our identification documents. Haris and I had credentials issued by IFOR, but George's I.D. was older and had been issued by the U.N. The Serbs didn't like it. An officer appeared, with an angry face under a high, short-billed cap decorated with the Serbian double eagle. I thought he looked remarkably like Ratko Mladic. His soldiers kept peering up and down the road, which remained empty. Haris and George were absolutely silent. I wondered if Haris still carried the pistol and grenade he had told me about. The phrase he had used—"how things run on the other side when you are caught"—kept going through my mind. I wasn't afraid for myself—these guys would surely not mess with an American journalist at this point—but I had no idea what was going through my companions' minds. Finally, having detained us for several minutes, the Serbs let us pass.

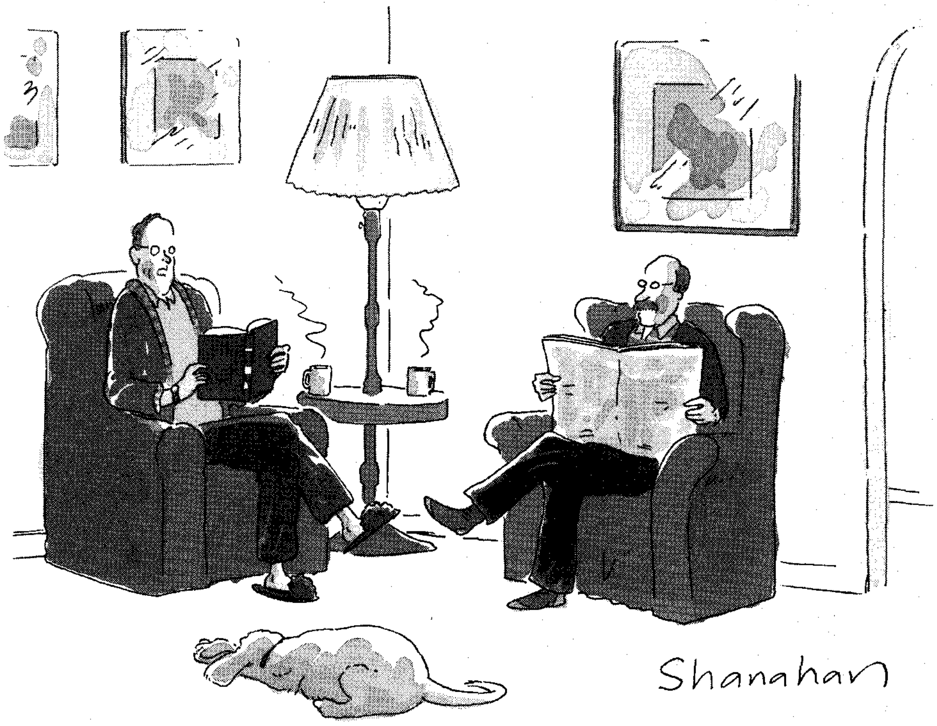
George drove extra carefully for a while. Haris started kicking his left boot with his right. George snickered. "Trying to get my heart back out of my shoe," Haris explained to me, with his crooked grin. "I think I'll have two cigarettes," he said, fumbling theatrically for his pack. Then he said to George, quite seriously, "I was bad enough, they thought—a fucking Muslim. But you were worse—a Serb, a fucking traitor. George, if they had made you get out of the vehicle and taken you off someplace, I would have jumped behind the wheel and run for it. You would have been on your own."

"That would have been the right thing to do," George said.

A mile or two later, we passed a small American IFOR encampment. "Wrong spot, boys," Haris muttered. "The bad guys are back there." He sighed. "And they'll always know where you are, and you'll never know where they are."

We crossed back into Bosnian-held territory (actually, Bosnian Croat territory) and entered the small town of Orasje. Haris said that he had shown a group of G.I.s around Orasje the last time he was there, and that they had scared him badly at one stop by all jumping out on the wrong side of the van. "I told them, 'This was the front line. Anywhere that was ever the front line in this war, don't step anywhere that isn't paved. It might be a mine.' But they all jumped right out onto the ground. I dived behind the van. I guess they thought I was crazy. I just hope they don't have to learn the hard way."

We parked on a side street and made our way on foot to the riverbank. The Sava was flooded—a cold, brown expanse maybe a half mile across. The bridge over the river to Croatia had been destroyed in the war, and a long line of cars now waited on each side for a couple of small ferries to take them across. But there were also little flat-bottomed skiffs with outboard motors carrying the foot traffic. I tossed my bags into one of them. A freezing rain was falling, and I said goodbye to Haris and George on the bank. Haris pulled up the hood of his windbreaker and gave me a traditional Bosnian farewell: "Come back." He grinned, and at that moment he looked, I thought, like any happy-go-lucky Balkan kid standing there—except for his quiet, unusually intense eyes. I huddled on a bench between a Croatian soldier and an old market woman as we putted off across the water. To the east we could see American tanks and big military trucks lumbering south across a pontoon bridge. ♦



"I'm sure that when you're ready you'll tell me what you've done with my wife."

OUR LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS

MY HABIT

Crack is a pernicious drug that has ravaged our cities. But what does it mean if we find the detritus it leaves behind compellingly beautiful?

BY PAUL SHEEHAN

THE morning after New York's great January blizzard, I took a long walk to the places where I often explore my arcane little niche of the drug world. I walked up Central Park West from the Nineties to Harlem and Morningside Park, passed under the lee of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, and crossed over to Riverside Park. All are fertile drug sites for me.

The city looked gloriously serene and cleansed, but I was curious to see if my specialty, the crack trade, had paused during the previous day and night of heavy snow. The crack epidemic still rages quietly, even though it has largely slipped from public concern, and a popular myth has grown that the trade is burning itself out because so many crack addicts became zombies. But the police don't see any burnout among hard-core users. And from my peculiar perch I find that the trade seems as busy as ever. I wanted to see what the snow would reveal.

It revealed that the crack trade had not paused. In two hours, I found a dozen vials newly discarded on the fresh snow. Each had been used in the narrow space of time since the blizzard had dissipated. Most of the vials had been used outside, but a few had been thrown out of windows and had landed upright in the powdery snow, like little missiles.

Every New Yorker has stepped over empty crack vials, yet most people tell me they don't even know what a crack vial looks like. I look, and so I find. During my walk after the blizzard, I also came upon a man lighting his crack pipe in Morningside Park. It was ten o'clock in the morning, and the park was filled with children and parents playing in the snow. He was clearly, as they say on the street, "thirsty."

I waited until he left, then walked to his spot and saw something I had hoped to find. Lying bright on a snowdrift was a small glass tube, not quite an inch long, with a blue plastic cap inserted in the top. The inside surface of the glass was coated with the white residue of crack. I don't know why the man had neatly reinserted the cap before throwing the vial away, but a lot of crack addicts have that fastidious habit. I watched him walking away, then examined the slender vial. I knew I held a totem of the quenchless thirst for crack in my hand, but I did not feel sorry for him, because he had left a type of crack vial I had not seen before. I was thrilled.

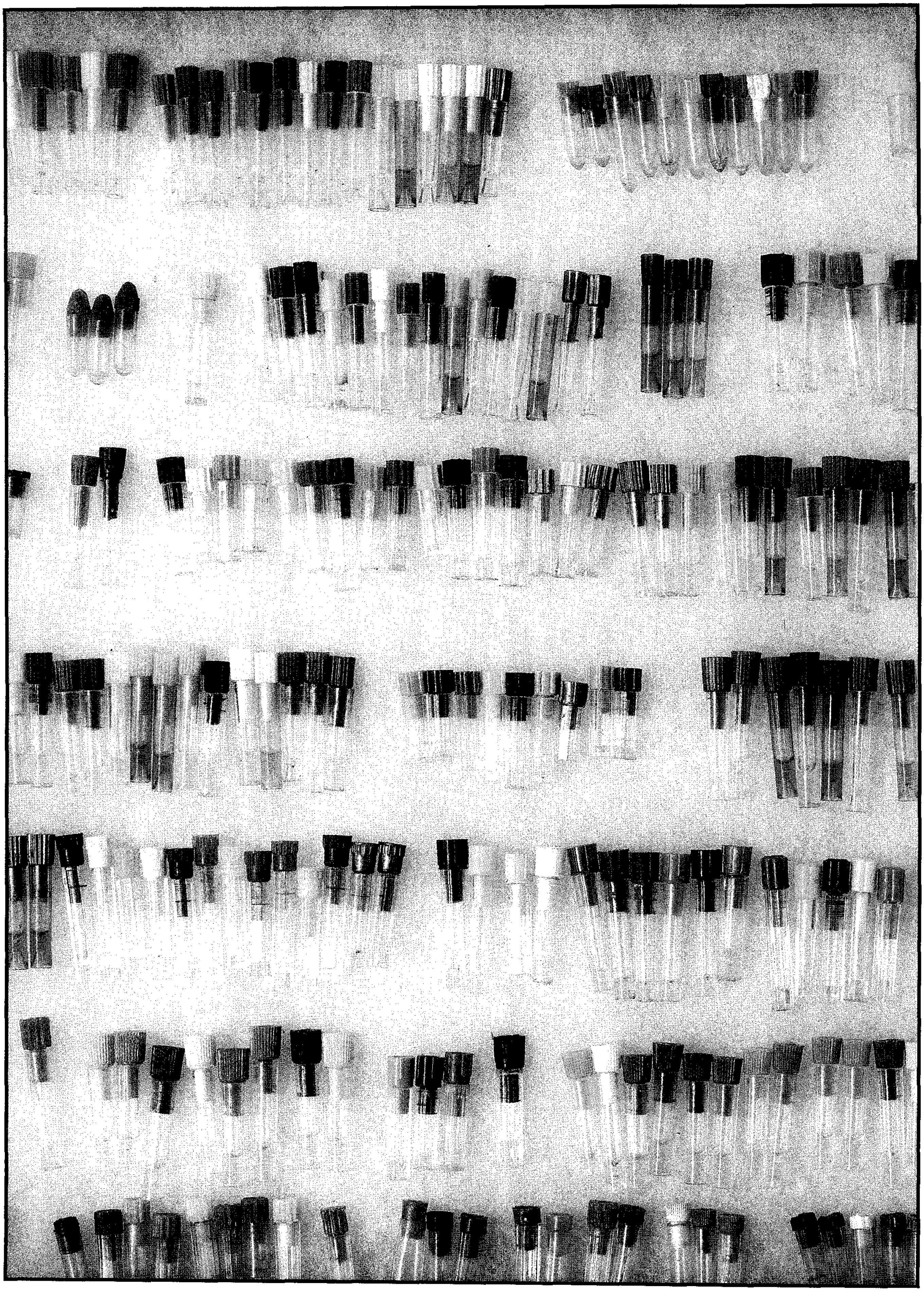
I WRITE for a living, but I am also the owner and curator of what is almost certainly the world's largest collection of crack vials. The crack vial first turned up in New York and Florida, and was invented specifically as a package for crack cocaine, which comes in a pebble form that must be handled with care. For a decade, the vials have been made illegally in an abundance of styles, and they have been discarded by the tens of thousands on the streets of New York. My collection is a measure of this abundance, and a small monument to it.

Inevitably, it has become more difficult to find new vials as the collection has grown into the hundreds, so my search has widened, and the terrain has become more unfamiliar and sometimes dangerous. Last November, I was surrounded by drug dealers in the notorious Cabrini-Green housing project in Chicago. I had gone there looking for Chicago crack vials and had not found any, and so had begun to root around the buildings, until I became an object of inspection for every lookout and enforcer at work in the project that day. They kept asking me, "Wassup, slick boy?" This was an unnecessary risk, an obsessional predicament, and all for something that most people would regard as worthless. I smiled and introduced myself as "Father Sheehan from St. Joseph's," and, with a measured, priestly gait, continued on my way out of Cabrini. (I am not a priest.) And I discovered belatedly that addicts don't use crack vials in Chicago; they use tiny plastic bags.

As I have wandered around rough neighborhoods, talking to addicts and cops and scholars, the underground world of crack has revealed some of itself to me. I learned about "mills," where heroin and cocaine are processed for street distribution. The cocaine powder is cooked into the more potent form of crack cocaine: teams of women, sometimes naked, I was told, fill hundreds of vials a day—an operation known as "bottling up." The idea that naked women are employed to fill crack vials seemed a patently absurd urban myth, but serious people, among them several urban ethnographers, assured me that it was true. Drug dealers are paranoid about pilfering. "A naked woman can't steal it, because she's got nowhere to put it" is how one source explained it.

I learned the street names of many of the vials: bunnies, crazies, supers, skinnies, flavors, bullets, and Taj Mahals. The word "vial" carries the heavy connotation of poison, and it is a term that users avoid, preferring to call the vials "caps." Users in need of the drug are "thirsty" or are "looking for Scotty" (as in "Beam me up, Scotty," from "Star Trek") or looking for "rock" or "ready rock." New crack vials are usually sold in bags of fifty at grocery stores and bodegas, and the wholesale business appears to be dominated by immigrants from Yemen. "The crack-vial manufacturers have eluded us so far," Inspector William Taylor, of the New York Police Department drug squad, told me. "The information we have is that the vials are brought in from overseas." When I told him I had heard that they are brought in from the Bronx and Queens, he conceded that that may also be true. The police occasionally conduct sweeps against the paraphernalia industry and confiscate display boards, which are kept under shops'

CHRISTOPHER BURKE



From the "Main Collection" of Upper West Side plastic crack vials: A compound of juvenilia and death.

counters and used to show drug dealers the available range of vials' colors and designs.

The colors can denote a selling crew or a supplier or a product or a gang territory, or they can simply be random. I have heard dealers on Amsterdam Avenue shouting "We got blue!" or "Blue is up!" to alert buyers that blue-capped crack vials are on the street. Crack is price-driven, and the price is generally three to five dollars per vial, sometimes as low as two. The whole point of crack, which in its most common form is a cooked mixture of cocaine, lidocaine (a synthetic crystalline compound used in anesthetics), and baking soda, is to create more value out of a kilo of cocaine powder by making a drug that can produce an intense high at a very low price, thus vastly expanding the market downward. The more intensely addictive quality of crack is simply a bonus.

Blue caps? I have seventy different ones, blue being the most common color in a collection that at the time of writing contains five hundred and sixty-two different crack vials. They are displayed in five Riker Specimen Mounts, thin cases with glass fronts which can be hung on the wall; the cases were designed to hold insects. Each of my cases has a name:

(1) The Main Collection. A large case densely overcrowded with plastic vials—no glass vials—representing three-quarters of the collection and gathered entirely on the Upper West Side and mostly within a ten-block radius of my apartment building, on West Ninety-eighth Street, off Riverside Drive.

(2) The Taj Mahal Annex. A set of fifty-six plastic vials with ornate colored caps. I originally called this collection the Crown Annex, because the caps look like little crowns, but then learned that their street name is Taj Mahals.

(3) The Newark Annex. Glass vials collected during two visits to Newark. Everything there was glass, no plastic. Because glass vials break easily and perish quickly once they're discarded, they are much harder to find.

(4) The Harlem Annex. A mixture of both glass and plastic vials and caps that are unique to Harlem. They include "jumbo" vials—larger glass vials, developed for the suburban trade.

(5) The Gold and Silver Annex. Thirty different vials, either glass or plastic, whose caps are either gold or silver plastic. This is my favorite case.

PASSING

One dark afternoon in the middle of the century
I came over a low rise into the light rain
that was drifting in veils out over the exposed barrens
long long after the oak forests had been forgotten
long after the wandering bands and the last lines
of horsemen carrying the raised moments of kings
a few surviving sparrows flew up ahead of me
from gray splinters of grass hidden under the bitter
thymes and across the stony plain a flurry of sheep
was inching like a shadow they had the rain behind them
they were stopping to nose the scattered tufts while two silent
dogs kept moving them on and two boys with blankets
on their shoulders would bend one at a time to pick up
a stone and throw it to show the dogs where to close in
on the straggling flock the far side of it already
swallowed up in the mist and I stood watching
as they went picking up stones and throwing them farther
and the dogs racing to where the stones fell the sheep starting up
running a few steps and stopping again all of them
flowing together like one cloud tearing and gathering
I stood there as they edged on and I wanted to call
to them as they were going I stood still wanting
to call out something at least before they had disappeared

—W. S. Merwin

Among the five hundred and sixty-two vials are eighty different cap designs, possibly suggesting eighty different manufacturers, and each cap is usually produced in ten or twelve different colors. The vials themselves have numerous variations—hexagonal, bullet-shaped, long, squat, thin, thick, plastic, glass—totalling more than four dozen different types, but all of them are transparent, so the contents can be seen. Vials produced a frisson of excitement in me last summer when they appeared in tinted versions for the first time: green vials, then blue, then red. Most of the cap and vial designs in the collection are no longer made and will never be on the streets again.

I clean all the vials except those which contain crack residue: I don't touch that. (I also have eight vials with deep teeth indentations, which I keep in a plastic bag, out of sight.)

Why bother? What is the worthiness? Isn't this collection a variation on the parasitism that crack already represents? Similar brutal questions are posed by Geoff Nicholson in "Hunters and Gatherers," his novel about bizarre and exceptionally useless collections and collectors:

> What was collecting, anyway? You took one thing and you took another thing, you put them next to each other and somehow their proximity was supposed to create a meaning. You put certain artifacts together, drew an artificial boundary around them, and there you were with a collection. So what?
>
> As for the people themselves, I suspected that collectors were deeply inadequate human beings, compensating for a lack of personality, intelligence or love. I pictured them as a bunch of unsocial dullards: shy, oafish, unhip.

I am comfortable with these questions. I asked them myself long ago, and I have the answers.

The collection began as evidence. In 1991, the West 97/98th Street Block Association filed suit to block the reopening, by Volunteers of America, of a residence for homeless people, including some who were mentally ill, at 305 West Ninety-seventh Street. Two years later, the New York State Court of Appeals rejected a "fair share" argument that there were already thirty-eight shelters and treatment centers between West Ninetieth Street and West 110th Street, and almost none on the Upper East Side or on the

West Side below Ninetieth Street. Meanwhile, the center reopened in 1992, and neighborhood activists predicted that drug-taking, panhandling, and car break-ins would increase. Whether or not crack users did move into the building—Volunteers of America always said they did not—I did notice more crack vials between Ninety-seventh and Ninety-eighth Streets and began gathering them as tangible evidence that the block association was right. One of the denizens of West Ninety-seventh Street, a stick-figure junkie with bleached blond hair who always seemed to be crying, parked herself at the entrance to the Ninety-sixth Street subway station every day and panhandled. For the first time, I found vials on the pavement outside the entrance to my building. I felt that the courts and the city government were pushing the tide of drugs right to my front door.

Once I started seeing crack vials, I noticed their extraordinary variety. Then the writer Allen Kurzweil came to visit, still basking in the success of his first novel, "A Case of Curiosities," and he suggested that I put the crack vials in a display case—a case of curiosities. He then brought me a small Riker Specimen Mount from Maxilla & Mandible, on Columbus Avenue. After we mounted the vials, we discovered that when crack vials are massed in multicolored ranks they are charismatic. They have something to say. I put them on the wall, and when people came by they always looked at the crack case before even noticing any of the other art in my living room.

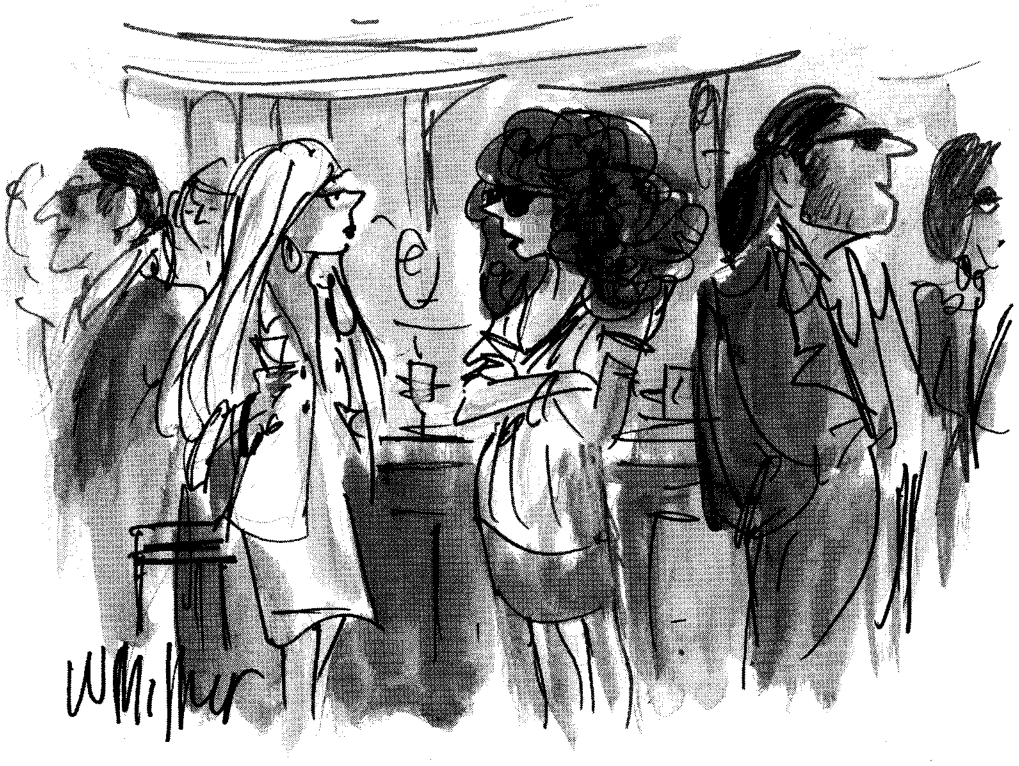
I can't explain why, but collecting became important to me. I stopped worrying about who lived at 305 West Ninety-seventh Street. Besides, the crying junkie had disappeared, the building had been cleaned up, and crack vials had become rare on my street. I felt safe wandering around some of the city's worst neighborhoods, especially after I noticed that people were calling me "Officer." Once, in Morningside Heights, a man came out of the bushes with his hands up when he saw me approaching. In Harlem, while I was on my knees sifting through a scattering of crack vials under a park bench, a young woman lolling on the bench, who was high on something, said to me, "You don't care what people think about you, do you?"

I have seen the entire panoply of New York's addiction debris: hundreds of discarded butane lighters, hypodermic needles, "cooker" bottles, tubes of glue, used condoms, empty handbags, empty bottles of Night Train, baking-soda boxes, rubbing-alcohol bottles, razor blades, and broken crack pipes.

In a paper that Doug Goldsmith, a New York ethnographer, delivered last year to the Society for Applied Anthropology he compared crack vials to the detritus found at archeological digs. Not long afterward, I spoke with him. "I've been on digs in the Southwest," he told me, "and I know those indestructible colored tops are the things that will remain behind, like pottery shards in ancient dwellings."

One day, there will be no more crack vials. And one day, perhaps soon, crack itself will be replaced. When the hard pebbles created by cooking cocaine were first sold, in the early nineteen-eighties, dealers used small perfume bottles or contact-lens cases to distribute them. Today's small, cheap, transparent, sturdy vials were developed as the market expanded, and the packaging of crack continues to evolve. Dealers are increasingly replacing vials with tiny Ziploc plastic bags, because they are easier to obtain, sell, carry, and, most important, conceal. When there are no more crack vials, I suppose my collection will have genuine anthropological value.

Artists have tinkered with drug paraphernalia to make aesthetic moral statements. The composer Philip Glass owns a work entitled "Found Dope #2," which was made by a friend of his, and which consists of crack vials and caps stuck on parchment. The most common reaction to my collection has been that it is beautiful, so I took some of my cases of vials to a friend, a distinguished art historian, because I thought he would find layers of meaning that had not occurred to me. He loved the collection. "It's like looking at a little graveyard, little tombs," he said. "Except it has these childlike colors from Toys R Us, a compound of juvenilia and death. It reminds me of the collection of Dr. Ruysch, a Dutch anatomist who draped fetuses in lace and preserved them in jars. Staggeringly horrible oxymorons. But compelling oxymorons. They ended up in the collection of Peter the Great." ♦



"He said he's always between the Hamptons and Manhattan. It turns out he means Babylon, Long Island."

FICTION

FAITH

BY TIM O'BRIEN

I BEGIN with the ridiculous, in June, 1952, mid-century Minnesota, and on that silver morning Herbie Zylstra and I nailed two plywood boards together and called it an airplane. "What we need," said Herbie, "is an engine." The word "engine"—its meanings beyond mere meaning—began to open up for me. I went into the house and found my father.

"I'll need an engine," I told him.

"Engine?" he said.

"For an airplane."

My father thought about it. "Makes sense," he said. "One airplane engine, coming up."

"When?"

"Soon enough. Pronto."

Was this a promise?

Was this duplicity?

Herbie and I waited all summer. We painted our airplane green. We cleared a runway in the back yard, moving the big white birdbath, digging up one of my mother's rhododendrons. We eyed our plane.

"What if it crashes?" I said.

Herbie made a scoffing noise. "Parachutes," he said. A couple of his front teeth were missing, which caused bubbles to form when he laughed at me. "Anyway, don't be stupid. We'll drop bombs on people. Bomb my house."

So we filled Mason jars with gasoline. Through July and August, in the soft, grave density of that prairie summer, we practiced our bombing runs. Herbie was eight, I was seven. We made the sounds an engine would make. In our heads, where the world was, we bombed Mrs. Catchitt's garage, the United Methodist Church across the street, Jerry Powell and his cousin Ernest, and other people we despised. Mostly, though, we bombed Herbie's house. Herbie seemed to hate the place and everything inside it—pathological hatred. The house was huge and Catholic and yellow, a half block away, full of in-laws, aunts, cousins, nuns, grandmothers, brothers, sisters—and Mary Jean. Always Mary Jean. It was a scary house, I thought, and Herbie thought so, too. He liked yelling "Die!" as he banked into a dive. He said things about his mother, about black bones and fires in the attic.

For me, the bombing was fine. It seemed useful, vaguely productive, but the best part was flight itself, or the anticipation of flight, and over those summer days the word "engine" did engine work in my thoughts. I did not envision machinery. I envisioned thrust: a force pressing upward and outward, even beyond. This notion had its objective component—properties both firm and man-made—but on a higher level, as pure idea, the engine that my father would be bringing home did not operate on mechanical principles. I knew nothing, for example, of propellers and gears and such. My engine would somehow *contain* flight. Like a box, I imagined, which when opened would release the magical qualities of levitation.

At night, in bed, I'd find myself murmuring that powerful, empowering word: "engine." I loved its sound. I loved everything it meant, everything it did not mean but should have.

SUMMER ended, autumn came, and what my father finally brought home was a turtle. A mud turtle—small and black. My dad had a proud look on his face when he placed it on our back-yard runway.

"That's a turtle," Herbie said.

"Toby," said my father. "I think his name is Toby."

"I *know* his name," Herbie said. "Every turtle on earth, they're all called Toby. Every single one. I mean, God, it's still just a stupid God-damned *turtle*."

"A pretty good one," my father said.

Herbie's round white face had curdled like a milk product. He scooped up the turtle, searched for its head, and then dropped it on the runway. I backed away, feeling tensions far too complex for me. Disappointment, partly, and confusion, but mostly I was afraid for my father. Herbie could be impatient at times, awfully loud, and was easily unnerved by the wrongs of the world.

"Oh, boy," he said.

He took a few slow steps, then ran.

If anything was said between my father and me, I don't remember it. What I do remember—vividly—is feeling stupid. The words "turtle" and "engine" seemed to do loops in the back-yard sunlight. There had to be some sort of meaningful connection, a turtleness inside engineness, but right then I couldn't find the logic.

The back yard was quiet. I remember my father's pale-blue eyes, how he gazed at something just beyond the fence. "Well," he said, "best I could do." Then he turned and went into the house.

I stood studying Toby. I poked at him with my foot. "Hey, you," I said, but it was a stupid turtle, more object than animal. It showed no interest in my foot, or my voice, or anything else in the physical universe. Turtle, I kept thinking, and even now, in middle age, those twin syllables still claw at me. The "t"s on my tongue: *turtle*. I cannot encounter that word without a gate creaking open inside me. Turtle for the world—turtle for you—will never be turtle for me.

Nor this: corn.

Nor this: Pontiac.

Have you ever loved a woman, then lost her, then learned she lives on Fiji with a new lover? Is Fiji still Fiji? Coconuts and palm trees?

At sixteen, in a windy autumn cornfield, I made first love on the hood of my father's green Pontiac. I remember the steel against my skin. I remember the darkness, a cold wind, rustlings in the corn. I was terrified. Pontiac means: Will this improve? And that Indian-head ornament on the hood. Did the bastard bite my feet? Did I hear a chuckle? Peeping Tom, ogler, eyewitness, sly critic—"Indian" embraces all these meanings and many more.

The world shrieks and sinks talons into our hearts. And we call it memory.

In the back yard that afternoon, alone with Toby, I felt a helplessness that went beyond engines or turtles. In a dark, pre-knowledge way, I understood that language was involved, its frailties, its mutabilities, its potential for betrayal. My airplane, after all, was not an airplane. No engine on earth would make it fly. By renaming things, reinventing things, Herbie and I had willfully deceived ourselves—as children do.

But there were also the words my father had used: "One airplane engine. Coming up."

His intent, I know, was benign. To encourage, to engage. And yet for me the language he'd chosen had the effect of a binding commitment, one I kept pestering him to honor, and through July and August, as summer heated up, my dad must have felt trapped by a promise he had neither intended nor could possibly keep.

"Right," he'd say, whenever I brought up the subject.

He'd say, "Pretty soon, partner." He'd say, "No sweat. Be patient. I'm working on it."

But a turtle?

Why not broccoli?

"Would you feel a blade between your ribs if someone suddenly yelled the name of your ex-husband?"

ALAN COBER

THE next morning Herbie said, "Your dad's a liar."

"He's not," I said. "Not usually." And then for a while I tried to mount a defense. I talked about Toby, what a fine turtle he was, how I could get him to stick his head out from under the shell by putting a pan of water in front of him. I talked about using Toby as a bomb. "Drop him on the mailman," I said.

Herbie looked at me hard. "Your dad's a liar. They all are. They just lie and lie—they can't stop. They're made for it. Fathers. They lie."

I stood silent. Arguments were rarely fruitful with Herbie. After a time, he strolled over to our airplane, picked it up, and carried it across the lawn. He placed it tail down against the garage.

"It's not a plane anymore," he said. "It's a cross."

"Cross how?"

"You know, like in the Bible," Herbie said. "A *cross*. Let's go get my sister—Mary Jean. We'll nail her to it."

"O.K.," I said.

We walked the half block to Herbie's big yellow house. Herbie had numerous sisters, four or five, and it took a long while to find Mary Jean, who sat playing with her doll house up in the attic. She was seven years old. Very pretty, I thought. Black hair, white skin. I liked her a lot, and Mary Jean liked me, too, which was obvious, and about a decade later we would find ourselves in a cornfield along Highway 16, completely in love, very cold, testing our courage on the hood of my father's green Pontiac.

The world sometimes precedes itself. In the attic that day—September, 1952—I'm almost certain that both Mary Jean and I understood that significant events were now in motion.

I remember the smell of that attic, so dank and fungal.

"We need you," Herbie said.

"What for?" said Mary Jean.

"It'll be neat. Tommy and me, we've got this cross. We'll nail you to it, like with Jesus."

Mary Jean gave me a gorgeous, breathtaking smile. I smiled back. This was love. Seven years old. Even then.

"Well," she said. "I guess so."

The three of us trooped back to my house. Mary Jean stood against the cross. "This better be fun," she said. "I'm pretty busy." Herbie and I went into the garage, where we found a hammer and two rusty nails. There was a frothiness in my stomach; I felt sick, but also curious. As we walked back toward Mary Jean, I lagged behind a little.

"You think this'll hurt?" I asked.

Herbie shrugged.

His eyes had a hard, enthusiastic, fighter-pilot shine. He gripped the hammer in his right hand. Quietly, like a doctor, he told Mary Jean to spread out her arms, which she did, and at that point, thank God, my mother came out the back door with a basket of damp laundry. The basket was blue, the laundry mostly white.

"What's this?" my mother asked.

"Sunday school," Mary Jean said.

AT dinner that evening, the hammer and nails lay at the center of the kitchen table. It was a long meal. Over and over, I had to explain how the thing with Mary Jean was a game, just for fun, not even a real cross. My father studied me as if I'd come down with polio.

"The hammer," he said. "You see the hammer?"

"Sure."

"Is it real?"

"Naturally."

"And the nails. Real or unreal?"

"O.K., real," I told him, "but not like . . . I mean, is Toby a real *engine*?"

My father was not happy with that. His jaw firmed up. He leaned back, squinted at my mother, closed his eyes briefly, then delivered a vigorous lecture about the difference between playing games and driving nails through people's hands. Even as a seven-year-old, I knew the difference—it was ob-

“Rufus, stop being naughty with Mrs. Curtis!”

• •

vious—but sitting there at the kitchen table, feeling wronged and defenseless, I couldn’t find words to say the many things I wanted to say: that events had unfolded like a story in a book, that I’d never really believed in any of it, that I was almost positive that Herbie would not have hammered those nails through Mary Jean’s pretty white hands.

These and other thoughts spun through my head. But all I could do was stare down at my plate and say, “All right.”

“All right *what*?” my father said.

“You know. I won’t nail anybody.”

“What about Herbie?”

“He won’t, either. I’m pretty sure.”

But he did. The left palm. Almost dead center.

Accuracy matters.

Herbie Zylstra was not a mean-spirited child. Nothing of the sort. Hyperactive, to be sure, and so impulsive he could sometimes make my stomach wobble. But it was never physical fear. More like wariness—a butterfly sensation. In a later decade, Herbie would’ve been a candidate for Ritalin or some similar drug, gallons of the stuff, a long rubber hose running from vein to pharmacy.

Accuracy, though.

Still September. A Saturday morning, two weeks before school opened. Around noon, Herbie stopped by. “I’ll need the cross,” he said.

I was busy with Toby. I barely looked up.

Herbie muttered something to Toby and picked up the cross and carried it over to his house and set it up against a big elm tree on the front lawn. He found Mary Jean. He told her to close her eyes. He didn’t have the strength, I suppose, to drive the nail all the way through, or maybe it wasn’t a solid strike, or maybe at the last instant Herbie held back out of some secret virtue, pity or humility.

I wasn’t there to witness it.

Later in the day my mother called me inside and told me about it. I went up to my bedroom. I was raging: a cheated feeling—as if I’d been robbed of fair due or denied access to something rare and mysterious. I should’ve been there. I deserved it. I had earned the right. It was my plywood. My green paint. Other reasons, too: because at the age of sixteen I would make first love with Mary Jean Zylstra on the hood of my father’s green Pontiac, and because ten years later we would be married, and because twenty years after that Mary Jean would discover romance with another man, and betray me, and move to Tampa.

After the nailing, I did not see Herbie for almost a year. He was sent to a Jesuit boys’ school up in the Twin Cities—“a hospital school,” my mother called it, which was probably accurate enough—and when he returned the following summer, in early June, things were different. I had new friends, Herbie had a new personality—a loner now, quiet and self-absorbed. The transformation was remarkable, edging up on radical, and if I were a believer in Pauline epiphanies, or in divine intervention, which I am not, I might argue that Herbie had been visited by some higher power during his year with the learned Catholics of Minneapolis.

Contrition, so rare in any of us, seemed to have struck Herbie Zylstra as a nine-year-old.

This is not to say that the reformation was absolute. He still had a temper; he could lose his internal bearings; he could go hard and hostile. In fact, from what I could tell, the new Herbie was wound tighter than ever. The sweetness was gone. That naïve, impish exuberance had been sucked out of him, and his recklessness had been replaced by qualities much more stern, something zealous and rigid, a higher but more wrathful boiling point.

For the next nine years, until he graduated from high school, Herbie and I went our separate ways. He kept to himself, earned respectable grades, played a tough and skillful forward on a basketball team that twice advanced to the state semifinals. He moved well. He was lean. Charcoal eyes, nice jaw. His aloofness carried power.

But then, in my junior year, I began dating Mary Jean, and it was clear that Herbie did not approve. I could feel him appraising me—an Old Testament judge, suspicious, alert to sin. When I mentioned this to Mary Jean, she laughed. "That's Herbie," she said.

"Well, sure," I said. "But it feels strange."

"Ignore him. Pretend you don't notice—it'll drive him crazy."

"I don't *want* him crazy."

Mary Jean looked down at her hand. "Well, all right, I'll try to stop it," she said. "Except I have to tell you something. I don't think you'll ever please him. Not ever. That's how he is."

"Why?"

"You know. The big brother."

"Maybe," I said. "But there's something else, too. It feels like—I don't know—almost like he *owns* you."

"He doesn't," said Mary Jean. She held up her left hand. "I own him."

But the issues were more complicated than either of us could have foreseen. Now and then Herbie seemed possessed by outright jealousy, the fierce guardianship one shows toward an object that, having suffered damage, becomes especially fragile and precious. Herbie never intervened, not directly, but I always felt a prickly rebuke in his presence. Even when Mary Jean and I were alone, I'd sometimes sense his cool shadow—as a tingling in my shoulders, as a pressure against my spine.

It's a mystery. Four decades later, and I am alone. Herbie killed my marriage. He murdered love.

In my bleakest moods, when black gets blackest, I think of it as raw perversion: Herbie loved his sister. Which is fact. Stone truth. He loved her. More generously, I'll sometimes concede that it was not sexual love, or not entirely, and that Herbie was driven by the obsessions of a penitent, a torturer turned savior. Partly, too, I think Herbie secretly associated me with his own guilt. I had been present at the beginning. My plywood, my green paint. And it was my father who failed to deliver an airplane engine, who ended up bringing home a turtle named Toby.

Toby: it's an obscenity to me.

I lie awake nights, mulling things over.

Surely the Catholics were involved.

That's another one—*Catholic*. I fall sick driving past churches. I see a priest, I think divorce.

Catholic. I'm full of hatred.

And this, too: *yellow*. Even color gets colored. Lemon drops taste like betrayal.

"Die!" Herbie used to yell, then he'd bank into a bombing run toward his big yellow house. Yellow matters.

That house—a big, spooky, broken-down, terrifying yellow house, three stories plus an attic, and even as a kid I knew that things were not happy inside. Too much noise, too much clutter. Its yellowness. The unmowed lawn. The screen windows patched with tape and newspapers. In the hallways and living areas I detected the smell of mildew, a corrupt stink, like the tombs of some musty old necropolis. On the walls—in virtually every room—were framed photographs of Herbie and Mary Jean. In most cases they were depicted side by side, brother and sister, but in poses that suggested something beatific. Hands on shoulders, fingers interlocked, gazes elevated.

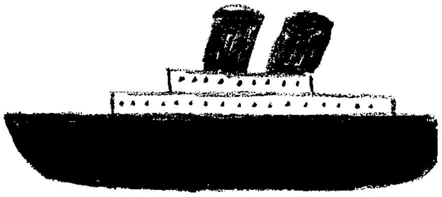
This house—this mausoleum—was *their* place, foreign to me, and sinister.

An instance. A night back in high school. Mary Jean and I were parked in her driveway. Radio music, a bright moon, my dad's car. Mary Jean had pulled down her shirt and bra, always an astonishing moment, and I was lost in the plenitude. Breasts were new to me—I hadn't yet mastered my enthusiasm—and some time passed before I realized that Mary Jean was crying. Not loud. A whimper. After a moment, she pushed me away, hunched forward, yanked her shirt up. I remember reaching out, half apologizing, but Mary Jean twisted sideways in her seat. "Stop," she said. "Just please stop."

"I didn't mean—"

"They're *watching*."

Mary Jean motioned at the house. A large bay window overlooked the driveway, a mere ten feet away, and in the dark I could make out six or seven white faces pressed up against the glass. The features were blurry. Like clouded moons—hazy and round and softly lighted. There was a noise, I remember, which must have been laughter, then the faces began vanishing one by one, each flickering out in turn, as if candles on an altar were being extinguished by a ghostly celebrant. After a moment, only a single face remained at the window, which even in the smudgy dark I knew had to be Herbie's.



I almost nodded. I almost greeted him.

Instantly, the thought occurred to me that this entire family was in love with Mary Jean, or obsessed, or caught up in some perverse form of idolatry. There was the cross. The scar on her hand. The evidence of intuition.

Mary Jean sat quietly, cradling her chest. Then she cried again. Later, she whispered, "That house. God, that *house*."

The next day, Herbie approached me after school.

He looked straight at me, tenderly, with hatred, then very slowly, with a teasing light in his eyes, he opened up a brown paper bag, reached inside, and passed over to me the Indian-head ornament off my father's green Pontiac. A cryptic, frightening moment. Herbie's eyes—so full of love, so full of hatred. And years later, when Mary Jean announced her plans for divorce, she would give me an almost identical stare—as if there were things I could never understand.

I had hidden mildly incriminating documents beneath the mattress of my bed—Mary Jean's and mine. These materials were secured well, I thought, for we had been married twenty years, nearly twenty-one, and I had yet to see my wife turn that mattress, or replace the box springs, or otherwise investigate the underregions of our love.

Mattress. The word chills me.

How Herbie came to discover my little stash is difficult to imagine, and I lie on this mattress at night, envisioning his stealth.

They're watching, she had said. He's watching.

The documents themselves were unimportant. Evidence of a minor deceit. What matters is how Herbie came to discover such artifacts. If he knew about the documents—their whereabouts, their implications—what else had he invaded? What else does he know?

And by what means?

Did he steal a key? Was he snooping even last winter, while Mary Jean and I vacationed in Tampa? Outside Tampa, to be literal. At a resort called Pine Dunes, where we played mini-golf and browned ourselves in the sun, and where one afternoon Mary Jean befriended a gentleman whose name I have vowed never again to utter. It is a promise, however, often broken in my thoughts. Kersten. Whom she calls Kerr. Whom I call shit. Preposterous name, oily being. At what precise instant, I wonder, did Mary Jean fall in love? And out of love? When the gentleman sucked in his belly? When he approached our claim of sand without invitation, removing his shirt, smiling at Mary Jean, and introducing himself with those vile syllables?

I doubt it. Not then. The arms of conscious liaison probably opened later, several weeks after we'd returned, on that humid evening when Herbie pulled out my secrets from beneath our sturdy mattress.

I wonder how long Herbie stalked me. And for what? To verify misdeeds already suspected? Or—more disconcerting—were the finds accidental? Did he steal into my bedroom? Did he open cupboards, sniff my laundry, shake out books, eventually take notice of our king-size mattress?

Who knows?

In truth, I'll admit, I had been pushing my luck for many weeks, terrified of discovery. I should have relocated my cache. Or destroyed it. And yet, as so often happens, ordinary life conspired against common sense. I am a teacher. I have stress syndrome. I married a woman with a hole in her hand. The point is this: daily flux presents its own ample store of worries, even without betrayal, and in this case I postponed an act of simple sanity and self-preservation. I delayed. I *forgot.*

"There," Herbie said.

The documents lay at the center of our brass bed.

"There," said Herbie, "is your angel."

My transgression? A misdemeanor by any standard. After our return from Tampa, I felt Mary Jean's absence as surely as I had once felt her thereness, her everness, her absolute and abiding and indestructible love. If love dies, how can it be love? By what linguistic contrivance? (Your ex-husband, for example, who now lives on Fiji. Did he truly love you? Ever?) And so I began to sound the vastness of Mary Jean's absence, or perhaps the stirrings of her actual departure, or whatever it is a man feels after his wife has devoted a three-hour plane flight to a discussion of the wit and generosity of a gentleman she calls Kerr.

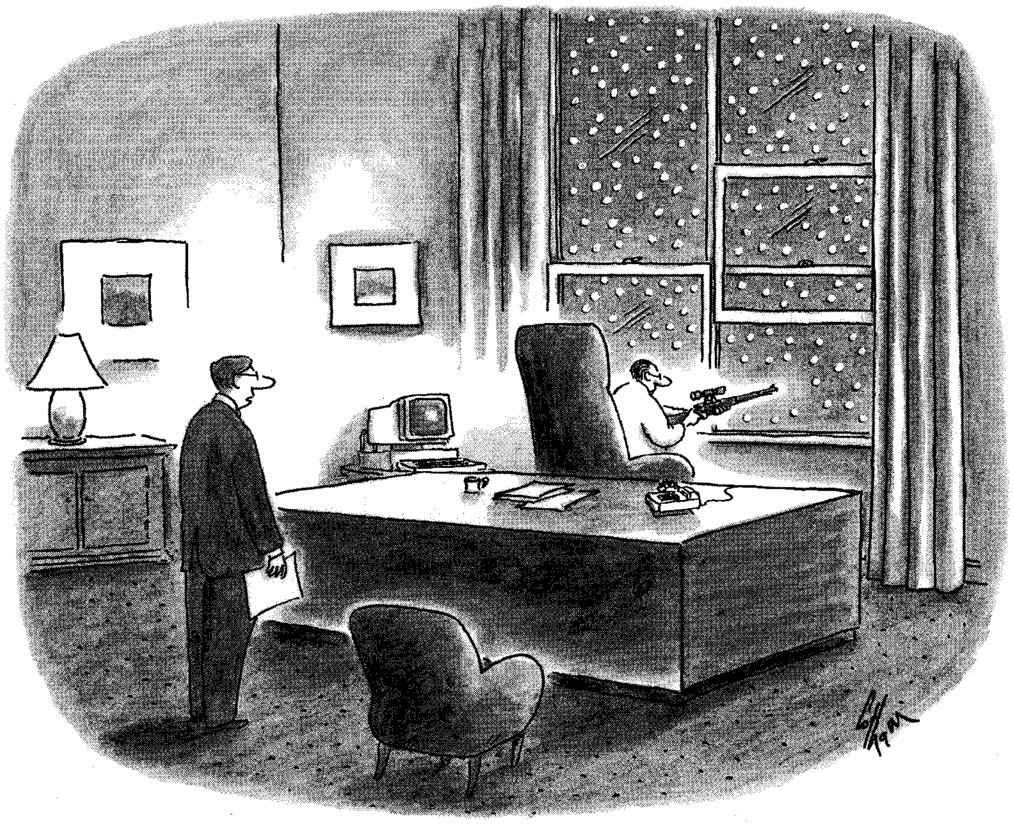
In other words, the signs were everywhere. Not merely absent-minded. Absent—gone, elsewhere. Mary Jean was looking for an excuse, I think, and Herbie offered her a very tidy one.

One evening he rang the doorbell. He had the balls to shake my hand. He kissed Mary Jean. He marched directly to our bedroom, to our brass bed, and without emotion he raided my life. He dropped the documents on a handmade checkered quilt. "Angel," he said.

As I mentioned, my crime was minor. Petty.

Certainly pardonable by love. The documents were these: fourteen uncashed checks made out to one Dr. Ralph Constantine. A psychiatrist. A phony psychiatrist, actually, whose name I'd invented. What was I trying to prove? My equilibrium, no doubt. That things were under control. It was ridiculous to suggest that our troubles were caused by my own jealousy and paranoia. And so I had concocted a counterfeit to solve a counterfeit problem—a sacred lie to save a marriage. Not so horrible, do you think? "Your deceiving angel," said Herbie, who then shrugged and walked away and left me with a future no longer worth pursuing.

For weeks, especially after our return from Tampa, Mary Jean had been insisting that I seek help. *Her* phrase: "Seek help." That's another one. And so, like my father, like all of us at one time or another, I had issued a promise that could not be honored. I did not *need* a coun-



"Still waiting for the weather to clear, sir?"

sellor. I wasn't blind, I wasn't sick. Nor am I crazy. I had taken to praying. I was addicted to Mass. I began talking in colors—that's how Mary Jean described it—at least in my sleep. But she had left me. She had absented herself, after all, dreaming of a gentleman from Tampa, and this was not the product of my imagination. Yet I loved her, so much, and still do, and always will, because that *is* love, the alwaysness, and I therefore wished only to please her, to reduce her absence, to pretend I was under the care of Dr. Ralph Constantine. All this in the hope of winning back the love I felt dissolving on a beach outside Tampa.

A few weeks ago, I paid a covert visit to Mary Jean and her new husband. Watched from a distance as she squeezed the gentleman's arm outside a real-estate office in downtown Tampa. He's a tycoon. Mary Jean seems proud of that. She's well dressed. Expensive jewelry, tanned skin, very beautiful. Herbie lives nearby. Watchful. I give the marriage two years.

ONE last example. The word "mice." Plural and ridiculous.

When I was twelve, Mary Jean got angry at me for kissing a girl named Francie Graff. "I didn't mean to," I said. "It was an accident."

"You kissed her *face*," Mary Jean said. "You kissed her snotty nose."

"I didn't mean that, either," I said. I backed away, waited a moment. "So did Francie like it?"

"No," Mary Jean said. "She puked mice. Don't ever try it with me."

"Who wants to?" I said.

"You."

We were walking down North Fourth Street. Past Mrs. Catchitt's house. Past the United Methodist Church. It was Christmas break, no school for two weeks.

"It makes me sick," Mary Jean said. "I mean, you kissed snot. That's what Francie said, you sucked her snot."

Mary Jean had her brother's temper, her brother's sensitivity to injustice. We kept walking.

"So why?" she finally said.

"Francie made me. And I'll bet you kissed almost everybody. You kissed Bill. You kissed Dennis that time in the warming house. You kissed Eddie."

"They love me," Mary Jean said. "Not Dennis. Dennis doesn't."

Mary Jean frowned. "You want to kiss me?"

"No."

"Well, don't even dare. Herbie'll kill you."

We stopped in front of her house. Mary Jean slipped her bad hand into a parka pocket.

"Do you love Francie?"

"Probably," I said. "But she still forced me."

"For how long?"

"The regular time. Barely a second—it wasn't even real kissing."

"I don't mean that," Mary Jean said. "I mean, how long will you *love* her?"

"For a while."

"She puked mice. Rabbit guts and mice."

"All right," I said. "I'll stop."

"Do you love me?"

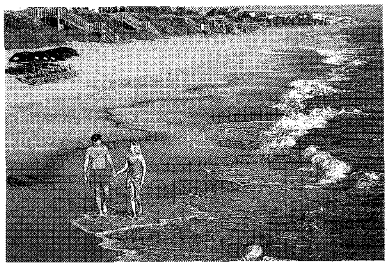
"I guess so."

Mary Jean laughed. "Herbie'll kill you."

DOES language contain history the way plywood contains flight? Are we bruised each day of our lives by syllabic collisions, our spirits slashed by combinations of vowel and consonant? Do verbs destroy us? Do proper nouns kill and maim? At a cocktail party, say, or at a ballgame, or at your daughter's wedding, would you feel a blade between your ribs if someone were suddenly to yell the name of your ex-husband? Does a color cause bad dreams? Can a cornfield make you cry? Do we irradiate objects by the lives we lead? *Angel*, *engine*, *cross*, *Indian*, *plywood*, *Pontiac*, *mattress*, *rabbit guts and mice* . . . Is your ex still in the tropics? Is he happy? Should you have been there to stop him, or to help him, or to bear witness as he made his way to a new lover and a new life? If the opportunity arose, would revenge be an option? Against whom—a sick family, a jealous brother? Revenge how? Hammer and nails? A pithy sentence, a squeal of outrage? Would it occur to you that your very vows of troth, your wedding pledge, had been a betrayal from the start, that you had been doomed by a crazy lie, that you were never meant to have and to hold?

Can a word stop your heart as surely as arsenic?

Turtle. Tampa. ◆



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A CRITIC AT LARGE

LEGENDARY LANA

The woman who somehow survived it all.

BY JOHN UPDIKE

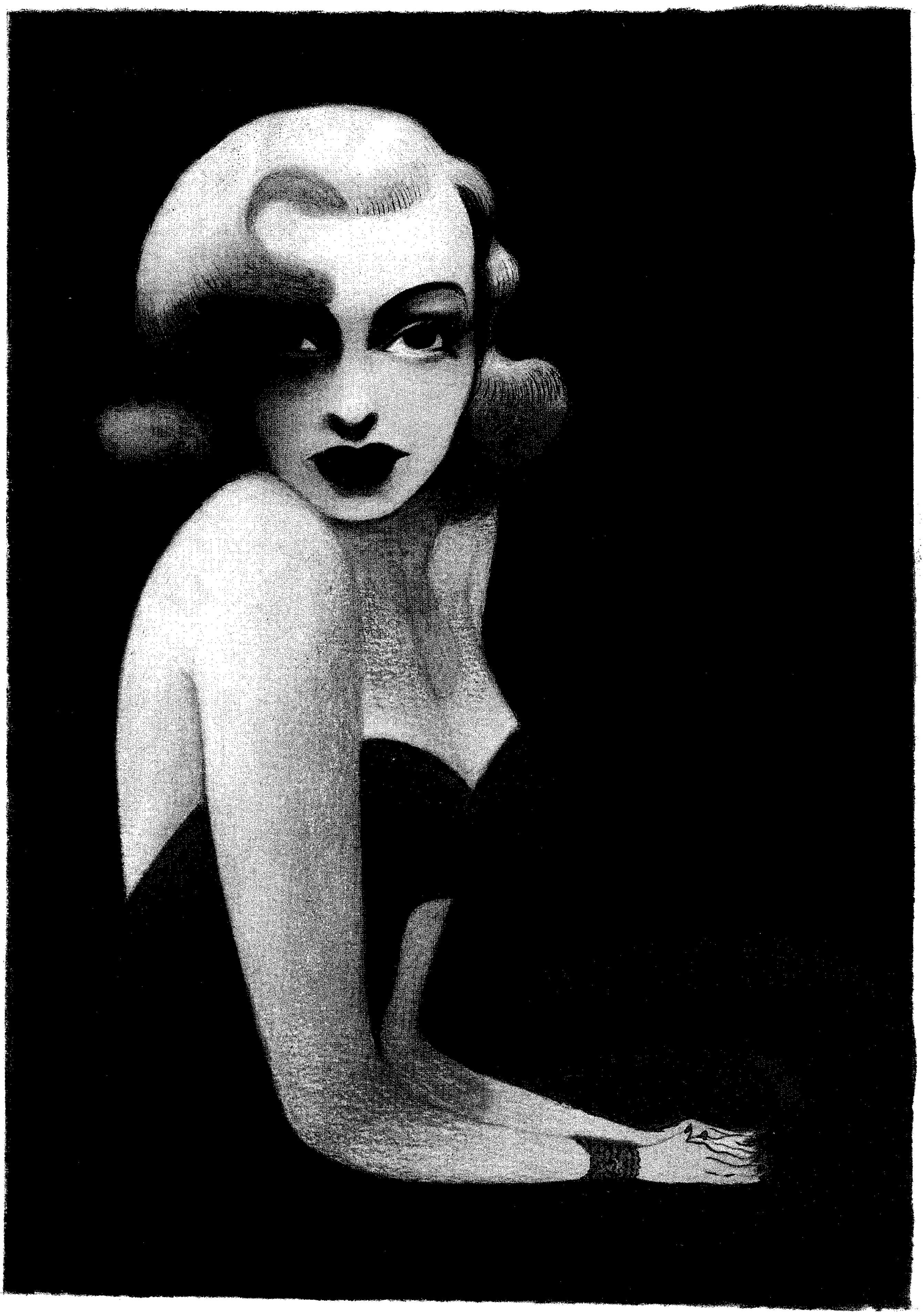
THE end-of-1995 wrapups didn't take much notice of Lana Turner, who had died on June 29th in her two-bedroom condo in Los Angeles, of throat cancer, at the age of seventy-four. The movie-star death of the year had been that of Ginger Rogers: a fond outpouring recalled her spunky screen persona and her iconic dance partnership with Fred Astaire; their mode of Depression escapism in long retrospect seemed heroic—a gallant, gutsy, graceful, and purely American response, on the part of the film industry, to a gritty national crisis. And there were tributes to Dean Martin, the nonchalantly gifted son of an immigrant Italian barber, and to Ida Lupino, a cinema vixen who, way ahead of her time, became a female director of films. But few remembered Lana.

She had had the misfortune, publicitywise, to die in the week when the big story out of Hollywood was Hugh Grant's arrest for lewd behavior with Divine Brown. Grant's was a pale and farcical scandal compared to the most famous event in Turner's life: on April 4, 1958, her fourteen-year-old daughter, Cheryl Crane, fatally stabbed her mother's lover, a minor, darkly handsome gangster named Johnny Stompanato, in the actress's Beverly Hills bedroom, in the wake of a fierce quarrel that the girl had overheard. According to Turner's account, Stompanato was in the process of leaving, with his clothes held high on a hanger, which Cheryl mistook for a threatening gesture; in the past, there is no doubt, he had repeatedly terrorized Turner with beatings and threats to cut up her face. This sensationally squalid event did not do immediate harm to Turner's film career—she went on to make her most successful film, "Imitation of Life" (1959), about an actress who neglects her daughter to attend to her career—but it perhaps soured the tone of her obituaries, which inevitably recalled Stompanato and her seven failed marriages. There is something ridiculous about a woman who takes seven husbands, as if she had rummaged through the drawers of masculinity and come up with seven dwarfs. Never mind that until the nineteen-sixties popular morality, reinforced by the Hollywood moguls, did not condone cohabitation without marriage. Turner underwent eight wedding ceremonies, as did Elizabeth Taylor: both serial polyandrists married one husband twice.

Personal irregularities, however, do not dim the reputations of Hollywood stars, who are licensed to live out our fantasies, in a realm above conventional constraints. The main inhibitor of memorial enthusiasm for Lana Turner was an implication that, unlike Rogers, she was a faded period piece, an old-fashioned glamour queen whose fifty-four films, over four decades, don't amount, retrospectively, to much. And who could deny it? In the massive compendiums that keep the accounts for cinema's busy, busy century, she gets short, even contemptuous, shrift. In David Shipman's "The Story of Cinema: A Complete Narrative History from the Beginnings to the Present," he calls her "vacuous" and "a void" and, writing of "A Life of Her Own" (1950), says of its admired director, "What Cukor could not manage was to get a good performance from Turner, but she is not—for once—a dead loss." David Thomson, in his opinionated and witty Biographical Dictionary of Film, sounds personally offended by Turner: she has "the unanimated, sluggish carnality of a thick broad on the make. No actress, always inclined to veil her nature in the posturing of melodrama, she was close to the spirit of small-town waitresses ready to be picked up by a toothbrush salesman with a cousin in casting. Her private life only proved that a dull face could have a tempestuous romantic passage." Criticism even leaks into some of her own films: in "The Bad and the Beautiful" (1952), Leo G. Carroll calls a screen test her character takes "wooden, gauche, artificial"; in "Peyton Place" (1957), her fictional daughter impatiently tells her, "Stop acting!"—as Turner was so evidently doing. Along with her numb, sex-stung look, she displayed a quizzical, vexed expression, a quick and apologetic furrowing of her broad brow that seemed to confess the strain and difficulty of being in front of the camera. Like Kim Novak, she appeared a bit lost.

The legend ran that she was discovered while sitting, or working, in Schwab's drugstore, in the middle of Hollywood. The facts, no less striking, are—as she remembered them in her autobiography, "Lana: The Lady, the Legend, the Truth" (1982)—that she had cut a typing class at Hollywood High School and run across Highland Avenue for a five-cent Coke, at a place called the Top Hat Café and long since defunct. A well-dressed man, "with sharp features, a mustache, and dark hair," asked her, "Would you like to be in the movies?" The question was classic, but her answer was original. "I don't know," she said. "I'd have to ask my mother." The mysterious dark stranger gave her a card that identified him as W. R. Wilkerson, publisher of the Hollywood *Reporter*. Julia Jean Mildred Frances Turner, called Judy, was fifteen at the time, and had recently moved, with her widowed mother, from Sacramento to Los Angeles. They had come not to break into the movies but to ease the mother's respiratory ailments. Mrs. Turner worked in a beauty parlor, and was tired that night when her daughter showed her Wilkerson's card, "and so she shrugged it off." But they were living, in their poverty, with a friend, Gladys Taylor, who urged the child to take the opportunity seriously. A visit to Mr. Wilkerson led to the talent agency of Zeppo Marx, and that

LORENZO MATTOTTI



Sex and diffidence: There was no Lana look—just a cloudy, heated Lana presence.

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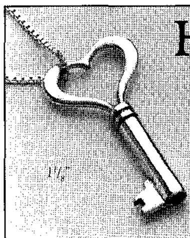

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led to an interview with the director Mervyn LeRoy and her first role, as a provocative teen-ager, who is soon murdered, in a Southern melodrama, "They Won't Forget" (1937). LeRoy remembered their first meeting: "She was so nervous her hands were shaking. She wasn't wearing any makeup, and she was so shy she could hardly look me in the face. Yet there was something so endearing about her that I knew she was the right girl. She had tremendous appeal, which I knew the audience would feel." Her rolling walk, in a tight skirt and sweater, made her brief role notable, and "the sweater girl" was launched. She herself later wrote, "I was just a 15-year-old kid with a bosom and a backside strolling across the screen."

Her diffidence was unfeigned. As a performer, she was purely a studio-made product. She had had no theatrical training, no elocution lessons. She had not been pushed forward by a stagestruck mother. Like most people in the thirties, she went to the movies, and as a girl she sketched clothes designs inspired by what she saw there; her highest hope for herself was to be a dress designer. She had been born in 1921 in Wallace, Idaho. Her father, John Virgil Turner, was a miner and gambler, who gave her, she wrote, "his bright blue eyes and small nose." After work, she remembered, he would dance with her, teaching her a few simple steps. He had time to teach her little else, for her parents separated, without divorcing, shortly after Judy innocently revealed to some playmates that he maintained an illegal still in the basement of their new home in Stockton, California. Her mother, Mildred Frances, supported herself and her daughter with beauty-parlor jobs in San Francisco and Sacramento. "Times were hard," Lana remembered. "Once we lived on crackers and milk for half a week." In San Francisco, they moved in with two other women, who used to stash the child in a closet when they entertained male friends. Mildred placed Judy with a family called Hislop, under whose influence the child converted to Catholicism. In 1930, she was told—as a God-filled dream of hers had foretold—that her father was dead. He had been robbed and killed in San Francisco after winning big in a crap game and bragging, according to a possibly Hollywood-flavored news item, that "he planned to buy his little girl a bicycle."

In her glory days, Lana Turner loved going to night clubs and dancing, but she was no hoofer, and she couldn't sing. Her voice was small, velvety, without the articulation and projection that stage experience would have given her. At times, she fell into a baby whimper, with elaborate lip quivers, that uncannily anticipates mannerisms of Marilyn Monroe, whose studied sense of glamour, from overpainted lips to frozen-whip platinum hair, was distinctly Lanaesque. Turner's ripe figure flirted with plumpness—she was only five feet three inches tall—and in that unexercised era too many nightcaps added their increments to her bones. *Time* once wrote that "in any posture, Lana suggests she is looking up from a pillow"; at times her greatly magnified, oddly featureless face seems to *be* a pillow.

Yet one doesn't have to be old enough for Medicare to remember when "Lana" elided into "glamour" and she and Hedy Lamarr were considered the two most beautiful women in the movies—that is to say, in all America. Turner was M-G-M's female answer to Clark Gable, a fair-sex hunk, and was paired with him in four movies. Her prime was the second half of the forties, when she made "The Postman Always Rings Twice" (1946), with John Garfield, in spite of a California fog and a bingeing director; had an affair with Tyrone Power, which she remembered as the high point of her romantic life; married (among others) the millionaire Bob Topping; discovered that she owed buckets to the I.R.S.; told off Hedda Hopper; turned down the script of "Madame Bovary"; and was voted the No. 1 box-office star by *Modern Screen.* Critics didn't like her, but for a considerable time two groups did: the people who made movies, and the people who went to them. Why this was so takes us a distance into the mystic communion that pre-television Hollywood enjoyed with its huge American audience.

SHE was not a void on the screen. At the minimum, she brought the unique, magical name—a coinage, according to her autobiography, of the teen-age ingénue, when Mervyn LeRoy, claiming "Judy Turner" to be "too ordinary," offered her Leonore and Lurlene. At a time when many female stars were imported exotics like Garbo and Dietrich, a forthrightly Wasp name was joined to a word out of space, a playful invention. She did not realize until later that "lana" means "wool" in Spanish and in Mexico is slang for "money."

She brought, too, herself, whatever her limits as an actress. She learned the lines and looked to her directors for guidance. Some of the lines in those studio-era scripts, pounded out by writers with frustrated literary aspirations, defied plausible delivery. In "Johnny Eager" (1941) she is supposed to be, in her high heels and tottering oval hat, a sociology student who suddenly quotes from "Cyrano de Bergerac" to a hoodlum on parole. In "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" (1941), according to the harsh David Shipman, "Lana Turner has to listen to a fellow diner who asks 'Has anyone read that poem by that new chap, Oscar Wilde?' and she deserves no better." Turner worked conscientiously in the fantasy mills. Unlike Monroe, she never allowed her nervousness or insecurity to break down the production of a movie or drive her fellow-actors to distraction. Her obituaries did not lack for tributes from actors who had worked with her: Hope Lange, who acted in "Peyton Place," said, "She had no sense of self-importance. There wasn't an ounce of condescension to her." Teri Garr, a fellow-performer in Turner's last film, "Witches' Brew" (made in 1978), recalled her as "very sweet; a gracious, genteel, lovely woman."

Her gentility comes through in her later roles as an older woman, where she comports herself with the crisp, guarded, smiling dignity of an all-American matron, a former cheerleader who has kept her waist and her legs. In "Cass Timberlane" (1947), made with Spencer Tracy the year after she grappled her way to murder with Garfield, Turner does not seem out of place as the wife of a middle-aged judge; where she does appear unconvincing, in that cozy, creaky adaptation of the Sinclair Lewis novel, is as a girl of the people, from the wrong side of the tracks. She could look tough but could not do tough accents. Her pose as the Brooklyn babe Flatbush in "Ziegfeld Girl" (1941) feels quaint; it is her regal descent of the stairs at the end that takes possession of the screen, and that she proudly remembered in her memoirs. Another piece of acting she cherished was the long fit of hysteria climaxing her segment of the three-part "The Bad and the Beautiful"; the segment as a whole holds perhaps her best sustained performance, drawing upon the two personae in which Hollywood could best imagine her—woozy slut and glamour queen. Before her climactic scene, a three months' break in the filming had intervened, and in her recollection she was thrust one morning, with no direction from Vincente Minnelli, into an old car chassis mounted on springs, rocked by stagehands, and doused with water by men in yellow slickers:

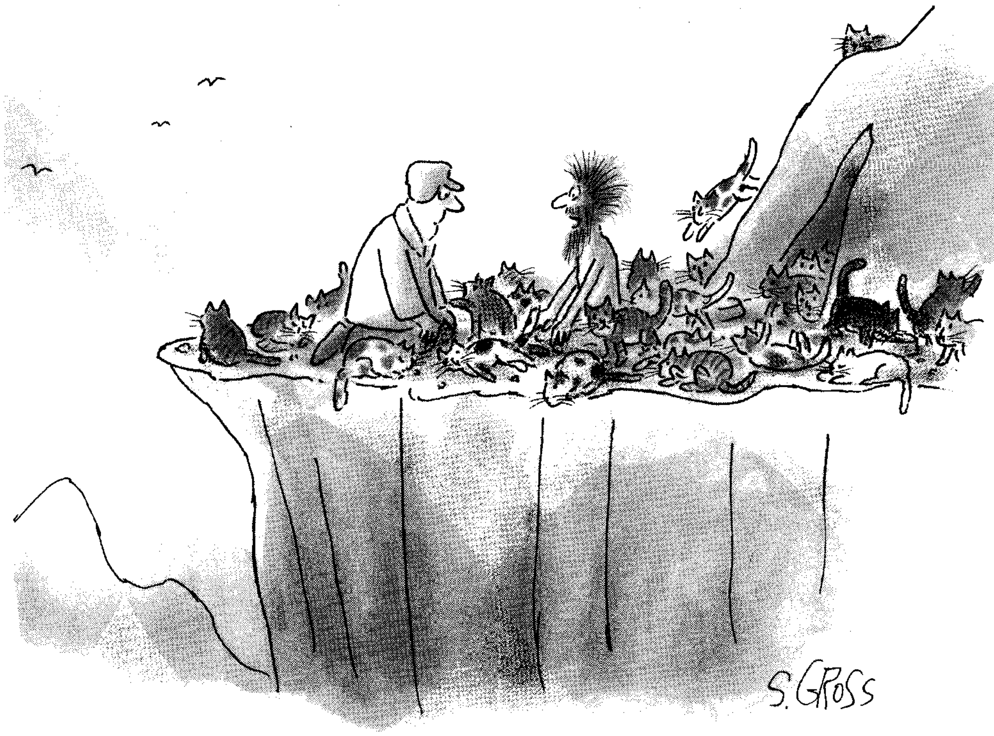
> I went to the set, climbed over the paraphernalia, and got into the chassis. I tried to re-create the shock of finding Jonathan with another woman, the scene I had filmed nearly three months earlier. I dug for it, dug deeper into my own feelings, into my own bitter experiences with love. . . . The car moved and threw me from side to side. I concentrated on my hysteria, building with each movement of the car. *It's my big night, my premiere, and meanwhile he's with another woman*. . . . Emotions welled up inside me and tears sprang to my eyes.
>
> I don't like to cry but once I am in tears, the more I try to fight them, the more they come. They came gushing now and were echoed by the gush of water against the windshield.

Minnelli made her do it over and over, all day, filming her from different angles, with different lenses:

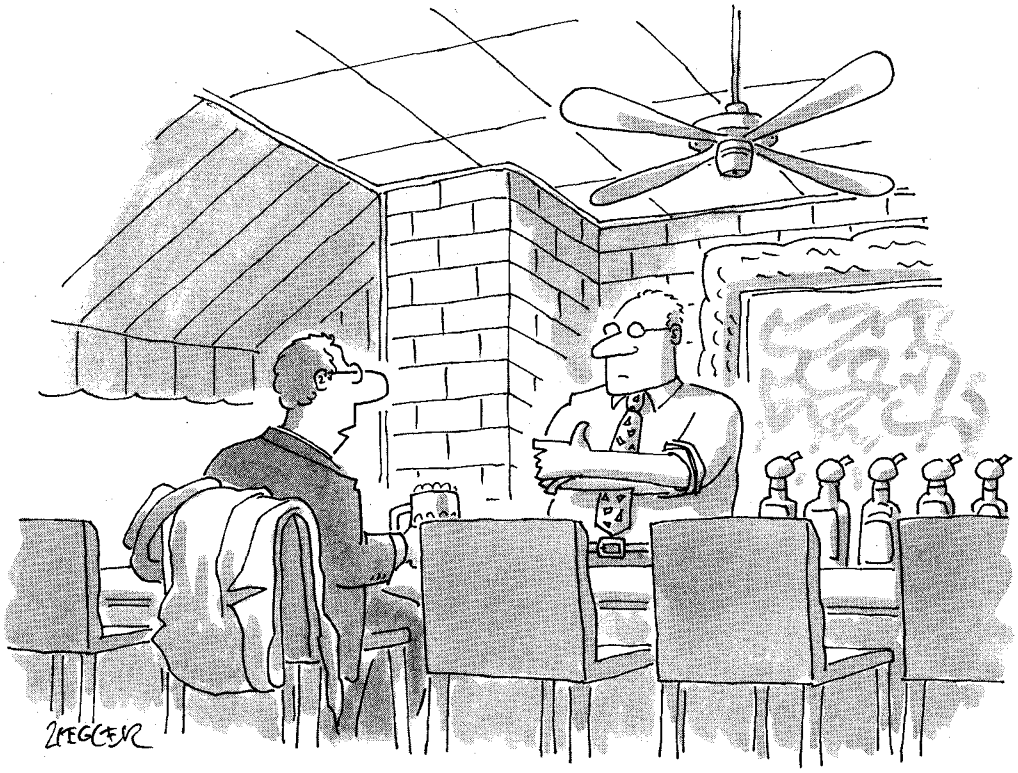
> The mike was pushed into the cab, and in my hysteria I sobbed and the mike picked up the sobs. The agony by then was genuine. Too much was coming back to me, too much of my own life: the bitter marital disappointments, the babies I had fought to keep and had lost—and that crushing last meeting with Tyrone, the man I had loved most of all. When Vincente said, "Cut. That's it," for the last time, I was totally drained.

This vivid passage tells us that (a) actress abuse was part of moviemaking; (b) Lana Turner took her acting seriously; (c) she had a lot to cry about.

MERVYN LEROY, having discovered her and created the sweater-girl image, took her with him from Warners to M-G-M. The grandest of the major studios, M-G-M was also perhaps the stupidest; certainly its products—bouncy musicals and family comedies and bloated costume dramas—



"The meaning of life is cats."



"Right now we're at a budget impasse. I maintain that you provide an essential service, and my wife feels that you do not."

didn't ask much intelligence from the American moviegoer. Warners at least tried to stretch its audience into awareness of the despairing, criminal underside of American society, and Twentieth Century Fox offered vistas of wit and sophistication. Turner might have seemed less vacuous had she been with a studio that developed her noir potential: her show-me-what-you've-got pout held a sinister challenge, as "Postman"—a film with classic moments, but no classic—demonstrates. She was not a void, but she was relatively inert and amorphous: examining the two spreads of publicity photos and magazine covers reproduced in "Lana," one can hardly believe that they are all of the same woman, or of any particular woman. There is no Lana look—just a cloudy, heated Lana presence. One of the few photographs that capture an individual beauty was taken in the harrowing aftermath of Stompanato's death. She was wearing dark glasses and a bandanna, and the stoically pursed lips tell it all: a bleached blonde who's been around, retreating into herself as flashbulbs beat on her white skin.

The Hollywood films of today, with their mechanical violence and computer-driven spectacle, seem made, most of them, for adolescent males—kids who need to get out of the house. The pre-television movies were made for adults, though adults, by today's standards, of a pious simplicity. They expected sin to be punished and the flag to be honored. Nevertheless, adult issues were addressed, including the nature of sexual relations; the old movies had more to say about the sadistic and masochistic components of sex than can be said in today's chastened atmosphere. "Kick her hard," a man in "Ziegfeld Girl" advises, of a girl who needs discipline, adding sagely, "Kick her where it won't show." In "Johnny Eager," Edward Arnold, a vigorous law enforcer, surprisingly pontificates, "Lovemaking isn't always correct, or gentlemanly, or considerate." The voluptuous sociology student is warned, "You're gonna get hurt, you know," and Van Heflin, as Johnny Eager's erudite friend, muses, "When a woman loves you like that, she can love you with every card in the deck and then pull a knife across your throat the next morning."

Turner's screen persona did not have the feisty class of Katharine Hepburn's or Claudette Colbert's; nor did it often muster the hard-won righteousness of Barbara Stanwyck's or Joan Crawford's. Turner, in most of her roles, lives for love and takes her lumps. Erotic high points of her film career include being knocked unconscious by Robert Taylor, offering to drown herself for John Garfield, being rolled from a moving car in "Cass Timberlane," going to the scaffold in "The Three Musketeers" (1948). If Johnny Stompanato roughed her up, it had happened to her before, in the movies; it took her fourteen-year-old daughter to rescue her from the morass of what we now would call an abusive relationship. In her films, she is often in bed, sick or brokenhearted, and often, in her frailty or fallibility, needs to be lifted and carried—another metaphor for sexual transport. She is malleable and self-sacrificial, consumed in the instant of intercourse, for which the kiss was the universally understood symbol in the days of the Hayes Code. And Turner was one of the great screen kissers, her small-nosed profile expectant, her round chin lifted to give her throat a swan's curve. "O.K., so you don't know your own strength," she tells Jimmy Stewart after a long osculation in "Ziegfeld Girl." He responds, "You ain't exactly anemic yourself." Love as a divine force, a magic potion, a doom that survives betrayals and double crosses and angry blows: this monogamous theme was one of Hollywood's contributions to order in America.

Turner, for all her seven husbands and untabulated dance partners, believed in love, and in her memoirs she cast herself opposite Tyrone Power. Divorced from Stephan Crane, by whom she bore her one child, she entered an affair with the recently separated Power. "But more important to me than money was, as always, the love

ɔst startling revelation in
ıe Lady, the Legend, the
:hat she had no eyebrows.
ɔeen shaved off for the role
ın handmaiden in "The Ad-
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or else counterfeited with
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; a detail from a Eurasian
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film industry's immense
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everything proclaims con-
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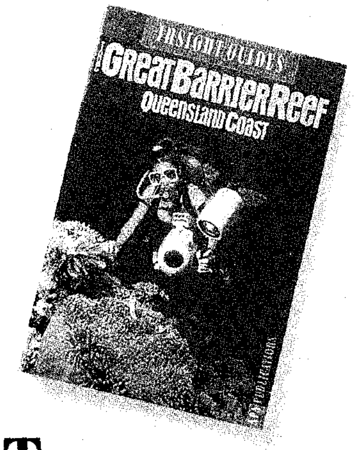

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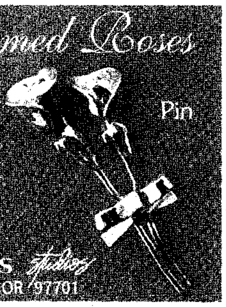

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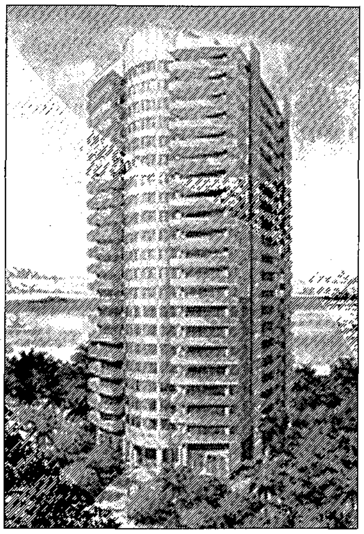

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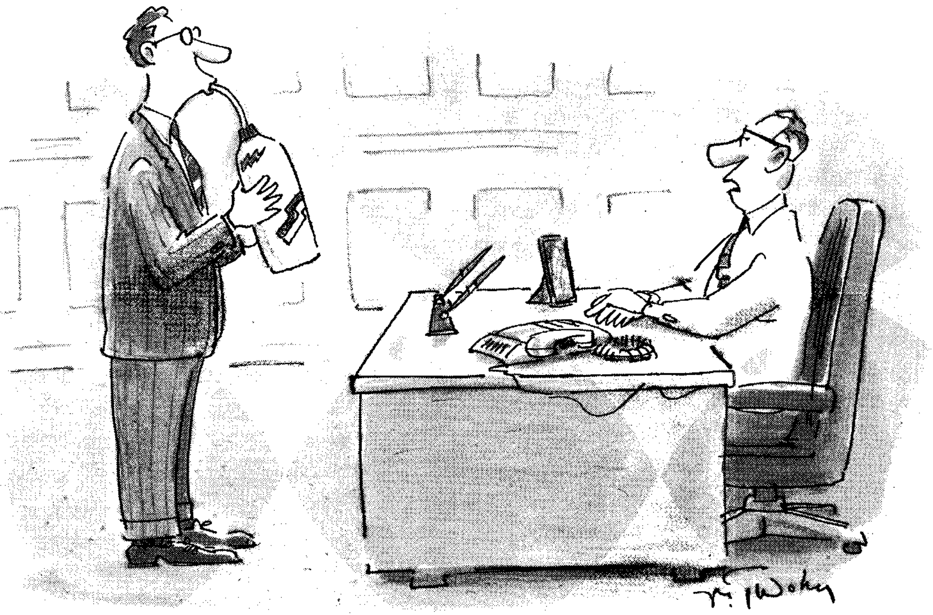
door on a motorcycle: "I had never been on a motorcycle before, but I was game. He told me to climb on behind him and hold on tight. Then off we sped through the hills of Malibu. I loved it!" In the course of their marriage, she confides, he embezzled from her, stole her jewelry, signed her name to documents, and produced a document (thrown out by the court) in which she promised to pay him two hundred thousand dollars in the event of a divorce. He really was a hypnotist.

HAD Turner been harder-headed, she might not have projected the vulnerability that her female fans could identify with. The housewives and working girls who trooped to the movies between 1930 and 1950 saw their furtive affective lives enlarged and glamorized on the screen. In a stylized movie like "Ziegfeld Girl," who was closest to them: Judy Garland, with her brassy talents; Hedy Lamarr, with her foreign accent; or Lana Turner, with a truck-driver boyfriend and a hankering for the bright lights beyond Brooklyn? The last is the only real story told, melodramatic as it is. "You know what's wrong with me?" Flatbush says. "I'm two people." So are most of the heroines Turner plays, torn between passive love and active ambition. Discontent and desire rile these lacquered love objects. They want to be actresses, they want to live in New York. "I want more," Laura announces in "Imitation of Life." Her constant suitor, faithful to a fault, says, "I love you. Isn't that enough?" She gives him a plain answer: "No." Even tawdry Cora, in "Postman," with no nobler aim in life than an improved roadside eatery, proclaims, "I want to be somebody . . . and work hard and be something." Virginia, in "Cass Timberlane," tells her exemplary judge of a husband, "I can feel myself dying. . . . I'm married to the most wonderful man on earth, it's true, but it doesn't help."

Turner won her sole Academy Award nomination playing, in "Peyton Place," a woman who has been a married man's mistress and has renounced sex, for herself and, if she has her way, for her daughter as well. Veteran filmgoers could be confident, however, that the former sweater girl would come round into a good man's arms. But Turner writes in her autobiography, "I might as well confess I was not a great companion in bed. . . . Sex was so much what I symbolized, so much of my image, that I closed myself off to the pleasures of the act." She insists to the reader:

> Sex was never important to me. I'm sorry if that disappoints you, but it's true. Romance, yes. Romance was very important. But I never liked being rushed into bed, and I never allowed it. I'd put it off as long as I could and gave in only when I was in love, or thought I was. It was always the



"It has come to my attention, Collins, that you are hydrating on company time."

courtship, the cuddling, and the closeness I cared about, never the act of sex itself—with some exceptions, of course.

Of course. She did have a wild streak—after all, what was she doing cutting typing class that day she met Mr. Wilkerson in the Top Hat Café? She was a woman who received more invitations than most, and accepted a good number of them. She paid a price in divorces, abortions, and one suicide attempt. But she did not self-destruct, as Marilyn and Judy did, as Ava and Vivien and Natalie did. This ultimate studio product held up. When the movies would no longer have her, she acted on television, and when her serial, "The Survivors," folded she took her name and well-worn glamour to the stage, to the dinner-theatre circuit. Gay men became her companions and escorts; she became a friend to her adult daughter, who had entered Stephan Crane's restaurant business and lived, with a female companion, in Honolulu. As Turner passed sixty, she turned to God, collected some film awards, and wrote—with the help of Hollis Alpert and others—a relatively frank and engaging autobiography. If you want to know how disappointing it was to go to bed with Artie Shaw, this is your book.

They don't make them like Lana Turner anymore. Hollywood's present queens are a lean, clever lot, whose grip on the box-office is unsteady—look at Julia Roberts. Only pop divas and the heroines of television serials enjoy the old, non-critical kind of audience; a more suggestible and repressed public consumed the products of the Hollywood that made Lana Turner. Might one even say a more generous-hearted public? Fifty years ago, we were still a nation of builders and dreamers; now whittlers and belittlers set the cultural tone. Custodians of today's correctnesses might prefer to forget a once celebrated screen presence whose appeal was so purely sexist, so exclusively female, built on bosom and backside, pouting lips and pencilled eyebrows, breathless embraces and limp surrender. But, aside from the undercurrent of feminist protest in many of the roles she played, Turner's well-publicized life showed her idolizers that even a beauty cannot depend on a man: a woman is on her own. ♦

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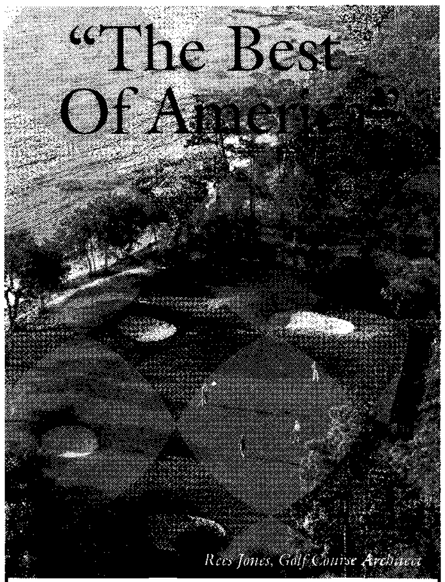

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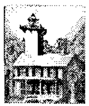

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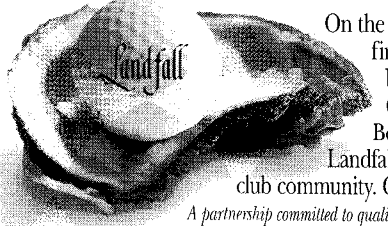

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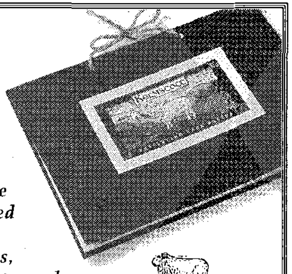

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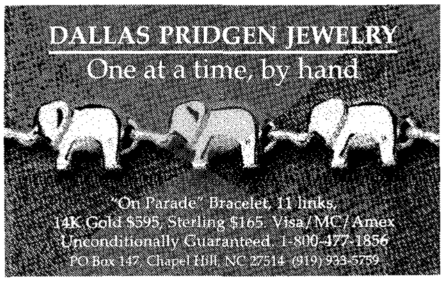

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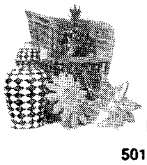

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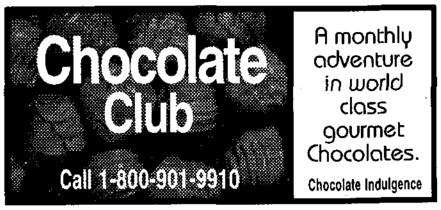

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KOOLHAAS IN 2-D

An architect collects his thoughts and works between covers.

BY BRENDAN GILL

WHAT sort of architect bent upon producing a lively book about his work and thought would choose to give it the weight and shape of a block of granite—a miniature tombstone? The answer, in two words, is Rem Koolhaas, who in his oddly entitled "S, M, L, XL" (Monacelli; $75) demonstrates that he is no less gifted as a writer than he is as an architect. He also demonstrates that he possesses an attribute rare in both occupations: an invincibly merry view of life, based on the assumption, if I read him correctly, that since everything is bound to end badly we should take care to have a particularly good time along the way. With that intention, Koolhaas has become a master of serious clowning, a latter-day Robert Burton. The same sunny temperament that led Burton to write "The Anatomy of Melancholy" has led Koolhaas to write this entertaining anatomy of architecture. He carries out the task as if on a tightrope, where maintaining a balance between opposing forces leads to frequent contradictions—and in Koolhaas's opinion the more contradictions the better. Having described with evident satisfaction his designs for houses, office buildings, museums, parks, and entire neighborhoods, Koolhaas disconcertingly notes that whatever an architect attempts to achieve in order to improve the built environment is likely to fail. In Koolhaas's view of the profession of architecture, winning is hard to distinguish from losing. In either event, on one goes: the seduction of the tightrope remains.

With a relish for outwitting expectations, Koolhaas has called his book "S, M, L, XL" in order to emphasize not subject matter but, like a sweater salesman, size: small, medium, large, extra-large. He has organized the book's contents according to the scale of his architectural projects, ignoring chronology, tossing in obiter dicta wherever it has pleased him to do so, and providing along the margin of nearly every page of text a curious alphabetical grab bag of quotations from divers sources. The first entries under "A" are by Susan Sontag, Tama Janowitz, James Gleick, Tennessee Williams, Henry Miller, and Ludwig Wittgenstein, but Baudelaire, Derrida, and Arnold Schwarzenegger also put in welcome appearances. "The book can be read in any way," Koolhaas boasts, asserting an analogue with the fact that "incoherence, or more precisely, randomness, is the underlying structure of all architects' careers." He seems to be signalling to us that his volume—weighing more than five pounds and containing thirteen hundred and seventy-six pages of words, drawings, and photographs—need not be granted the awe commonly bestowed on so strenuous an autobiographical effort. Although a chart in the opening pages of the book indicates that the success of his firm, which he calls the Office for Metropolitan Architecture, has been attained at the cost of his flying hundreds of thousands of kilometres and spending more than three hundred nights in hotels all over the globe, he has borne these traveller's burdens lightly, and why not? Personally and professionally, he has been having great fun: labor and play have been one.

In 1978, while Koolhaas was still in his thirties, he wrote "Delirious New York," which he defined as a manifesto for the Culture of Congestion, and which to this day remains unsurpassed as a description of the folly and the irresistible attractiveness of Manhattan. It is filled with amusing, rough-hewn one-liners ("What Noah needed was reinforced concrete. What Modern Architecture needs is a flood") and admiring investigations of certain once flourishing local wonders—turn-of-the-century Coney Island, for example—whose history most of us have never taken the trouble to learn. This early work, recently republished by the Monacelli Press,

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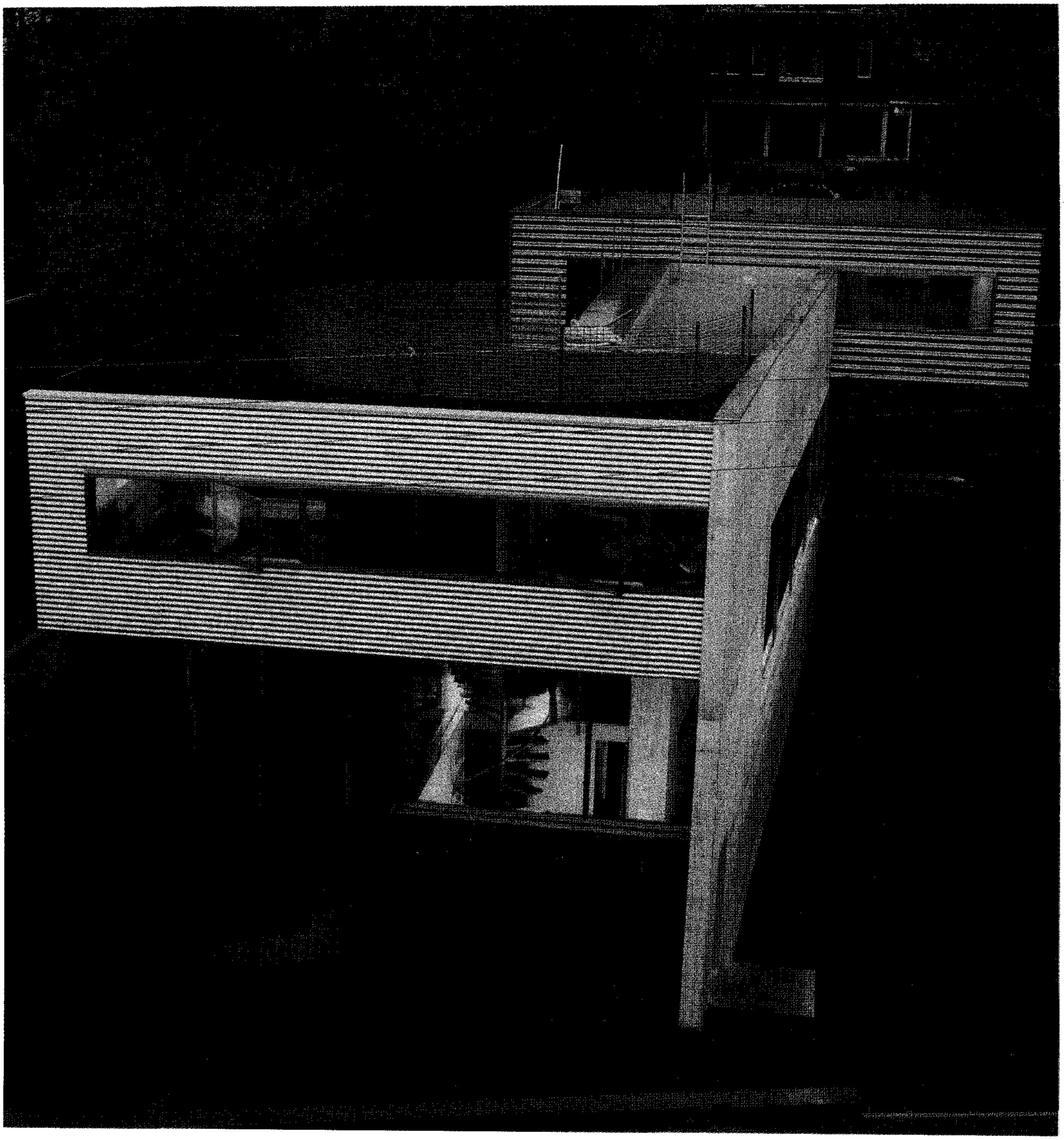
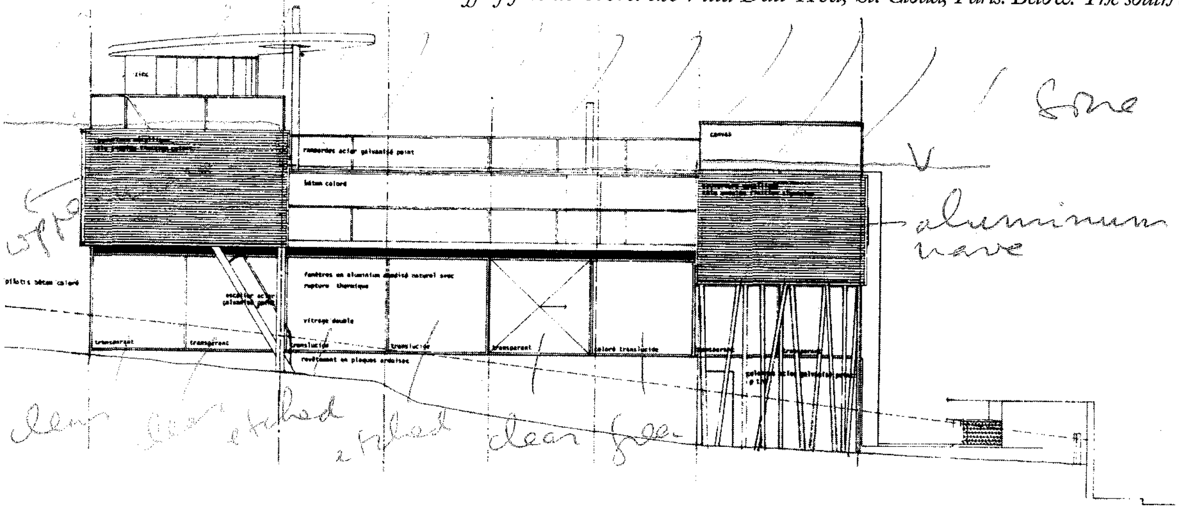


A whiff of joie de vivre: the Villa Dall' Ava, St. Cloud, Paris. Below: The south elevation.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gives every sign of being composed by a single individual—an energetic young Dutchman setting out upon a career of exceptional promise. Koolhaas at fifty-one, in mid-career and with much of his promise fulfilled, is quick to acknowledge that "S, M, L, XL" is the product of many helping hands—the flying Dutchman is not flying solo. He shares credit on the cover with the celebrated Toronto graphic designer Bruce Mau and the Office for Metropolitan Architecture, and on the title page with Mau, O.M.A., Jennifer Sigler (editor), and Hans Werlemann (photographer). The block of granite that I spoke of proves to be not a tombstone but a cornerstone—the base of an immense edifice of Koolhaasian fact and fancy, reaching exhilaratingly skyward.

ALL those kilometres of travel, all those nights spent in who knows what hotels have yielded an ample harvest. O.M.A. structures are to be found scattered throughout Koolhaas's native Netherlands and in France, Japan, and Switzerland. Like any architect seeking to break new ground (a metaphor that comes close to being literal), Koolhaas has on his drafting board innumerable projects that have yet to be realized—projects that were entered in competitions and then failed to win, or were prepared for exhibitions that never took place, or were commissioned by clients who found that they couldn't afford to build them. For Koolhaas, as for Frank Lloyd Wright, the ideal client is one whose relationship to his architect is that of a dog to his master, and for whom financial ruin wears the rosy hue of a sacrifice well worth making. As one might expect, the unbuilt projects are more revealing of the radical, chance-taking directions that Koolhaas has striven to pursue than the projects that, embodying compromises known only to him, meet with ready acceptance. It is in this fashion, among others, that an architect may be said to be simultaneously winning and losing. Prudently, in public he manifests a calculated equanimity—the smiling mask that conceals despair and that architects have worn for centuries, in order to preserve their self-respect as they abase themselves in pursuit of the next job.

A VOLUPTUOUS superfluity of full-color photographs and drawings characterizes "S, M, L, XL," and has the sorry effect of making Koolhaas's prose less accessible to the reader than it would be on an ordinary printed page. We have the designer of the book to thank for this problem. Mau is known for, in the jargon of the day, pushing the envelope, and in the present case he has all but exploded it. One must dive deep into the maw of Mau to fetch up precious snippets of Koolhaas biography and to sample a rich variety of Koolhaasian ruminations.

The sheer physical gorgeousness of "S, M, L, XL" greatly increases the usual difficulty of judging architecture from photographs. A building is designed and constructed to be viewed in three dimensions, and its appearance on paper in two dimensions creates an initial distortion. A further distortion—the degree of intervention on the part of the photographer, including his manipulation of light and shade and his use of a parallax-correcting lens—can never be accurately ascertained. In the case of contemporary architects, the difficulty is heightened by intentional distortions of perspective, which are a feature of their designs, and which architects of the past, following the Beaux-Arts tradition, would have considered the work of madmen. A photograph of a building designed by the classicist John Russell Pope—the National Gallery of Art, say—is comparatively easy to "read" and criticize; photographs of buildings by Koolhaas are optically incomprehensible, however much sense they may make in actuality. I drifted at ease—I could not possibly have marched—through the surrealist pictorial wonderland of "S, M, L, XL," and I felt as if I were drifting through the blue gardens and tawny castle courtyards of a Maxfield Parrish mural. Hard as I may have wished to pass judgment on a given project, I was often unable to tell whether the pictures were of a model or of the real thing, much less whether I found the project, in either case, admirable. Again and again, I was tempted to shout "Hurrah!" at one or another of Koolhaas's airy, zigzag, deconstructivist ingenuities, but were they really airy, were they zigzag, were they in fact ingeniously deconstructivist? Sternly, I would attempt to withhold my hurrah, but in vain: a whiff of the insidious Koolhaasian joie de vivre (bottled, it would be called Essence of Magus) would leap up from the page and render me mindless. ♦

ALL IN THE GENES

The new pros and cons of do-it-yourself eugenics.

BY JOHN SEABROOK

Philip Kitcher

ISADORE SELTZER

WHEN amniocentesis was introduced into northern India, in the early eighties, parents began using the technology to get rid of unwanted female fetuses. Many medical ethicists have wondered if something like that could happen in the United States—if parents here might start using prenatal genetic screening to practice a new, high-tech form of eugenics. What if it turns out that there really are genes that influence intelligence, along with a variety of behavioral characteristics, and that parents can test for those genes in the womb? How can you support a woman's right to have an abortion because a child would be inconvenient but deny her the opportunity to exercise that right because the child might become an alcoholic?

In 1992, Philip Kitcher, an Englishman who is a professor of philosophy at the University of California at San Diego, was invited by the Library of Congress to spend a year in Washington talking to the scientists associated with the Human Genome Project and evaluating the enterprise. The result is "The Lives to Come" (Simon & Schuster; $25), a clear and thorough guide to the major ethical and social concerns that surround human molecular biology today. The first part of the book is a useful account for laymen of the basics of the science, its prospects, and

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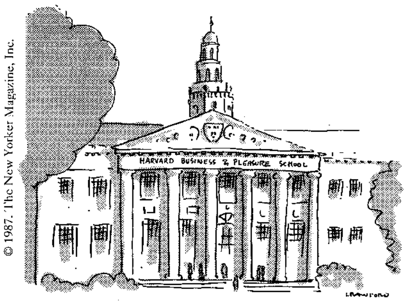
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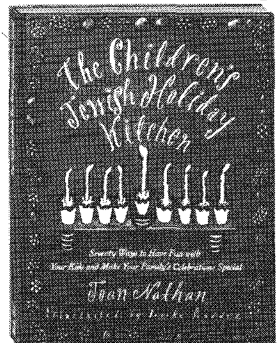
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its goals (including an excellent analysis of how well genetic testing works in forensics), and all this leads Kitcher to conclude, about two-thirds of the way through the book, that "some form of eugenics is inescapable" as a result of genetic testing—and, in fact, that "human molecular genetics is already committed to that enterprise." The question as Kitcher presents it is not whether we should practice eugenics—we already do—but what kind of eugenics we should practice, and how we can avoid the mistakes of the past. These include the biologist Francis Galton's dreams of producing a superior race by breeding people of wealth and class; the forced sterilization of the "feebleminded" and "criminal types" in this country in the nineteen-twenties and nineteen-thirties; the biologist Charles Davenport's nutty idea that some European "races" possessed a gene for "nomadism," which helped inspire the racist Immigration Act of 1924; the psychologist Henry Goddard's "intelligence tests," which were administered at Ellis Island; and, most terrible, the Nazis' mass extermination of non-Aryans (some of whom had been returned to Europe because they had flunked Goddard's intelligence tests), during the Second World War.

IN amniocentesis, a fetus's chromosomes are examined with an electron microscope for visible mutations, and the amniotic fluid is chemically analyzed for the presence or concentration of certain proteins that indicate severe genetic disease. Now, thanks to recent developments in DNA analysis, doctors can simultaneously screen for Tay-Sachs disease, which is particularly common among Jews of Ashkenazi descent; Fragile X syndrome, which is a leading cause of mental retardation; cystic fibrosis, which may affect one in a thousand people of northern European origin; and Huntington's disease—none of which they had previously been able to detect with certainty. And this is only the beginning. Recently, tests for genes that influence the development of a small number of hereditary colon and breast cancers have also come into being. If genes that influence homosexuality, alcoholism, and obesity are indeed found (different teams of researchers have mapped regions on different chromosomes where the genes may lie, but so far no one has actually cloned any of them), tests for them will presumably be developed, since tests are a reliable way for commercial sponsors of DNA research to recover their investment. One can foresee all the separate tests converging into one all-purpose genetic test, like one of those diagnostic machines you can plug your car into, which will yield a rich, accurate—although by no means conclusive—genetic profile of the person you are about to bring into the world.

O.K., so what are parents likely to do with this information? Will the simple choice that parents face today—deciding, once they've learned from amnio that they have a healthy fetus, whether or not to learn also if it's a boy or a girl—become considerably more complicated, and less innocent, as the technology matures? As long as an unborn child has been found to be free of severely disabling disease, many parents may choose not to know what lies in its genes—at least, not until it becomes possible (if it ever does) to *repair* flawed bits of DNA. It seems highly unlikely that any parents who want to have children would subject themselves to the horrors of an abortion in the twentieth week just because a genetic profile shows that their fetus might grow up to be fat.

Soon, however, technological advances may make it much less traumatic to pick and choose one's baby. Today, in the process of in-vitro fertilization a woman gets a dose of hormones that causes her to produce a lot of mature eggs; the eggs are harvested and fertilized; the lab inspects the embryos and disposes of the defective-looking ones and then implants three or four of the healthiest embryos—health is generally evaluated by the appearance of the cells and the rate at which they are dividing—into the womb. In theory, if you wanted a girl you could tell your doctor to implant only female embryos. If by analyzing the DNA of fifty embryos the lab could determine which is likely to produce the tallest child (some molecular biologists believe that genetic markers for height will be located) or which has the best chance of having a high I.Q., wouldn't you want to take advantage of this opportunity to improve your odds in the genetic lottery? Would this be wrong? Is there any difference between choosing the embryo with the best DNA and choosing the best nursery school for your four-year-old?

EUGENICS is to the science of biology what the A-bomb was to physics. It's both the highest example of the genius of the science and potentially the most evil

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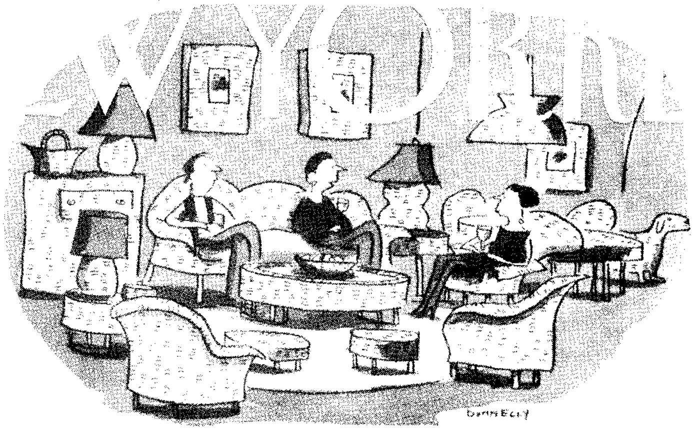

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thing that the science could produce. Kitcher gives us two visions of eugenics—the utopian vision and the dystopian. In the former, eugenics is used to reduce disease and human misery, and to increase everyone's freedom of reproductive choice. Few people who have been spared the birth of a severely disabled child by prenatal testing would dispute the statement that the technology is a wonderful thing. When one thinks of a truly awful genetic disease, like Lesch-Nyhan syndrome, a rare mutation in the single X chromosome in males which causes mental retardation, extreme physical pain, and compulsive self-mutilation—children savagely gnaw their fingers and lips unless they are constantly restrained—one wonders whether the child who would have to suffer from this condition has a right *not* to be born. Kitcher also imagines a truly utopian era, in which gene-replacement therapy makes it possible to correct such genetic mutations as soon as they are detected, thereby making eugenic abortions unnecessary.

Then, there is the dystopian scenario. Let's assume that your genetic profile is good enough for your parents—that you "pass," and are born. What happens to that profile now? Who gets to see it? Should it be public information—as freely available to your prospective employer or insurer as your credit rating is to a prospective lender? Kitcher points out that insurance companies may believe that they *should* have a right to inspect your genetic profile, and deny you coverage accordingly, since people who have private knowledge that potential major illness lurks in their genes would presumably want to load up on insurance: "After all, they may suggest, underwriting is the business of adjusting premiums to risk. Genetic information allows a more accurate assessment of risks, and consequently a fairer allotment of premiums." But such a regime might create what Kitcher describes as "a new breed of pariahs, people whose particular combinations of A's, C's, G's, and T's debar them from jobs and from security, people who also bear the burden of high risks of genetic disease."

Moreover, what happens to the notion of "letting nature take its course," of loving life in all its forms, if we no longer have to? Many parents of children born with disabilities speak of learning love and courage from their kids. But in a eugenic world, Kitcher writes, parents may feel more pressured to choose abortion, "even though they believe that a more caring or less prejudiced society might have enabled the child who would have been born to lead a happy and fulfilling life."

To avoid a dystopian eugenics, Kitcher says, it is essential to make sure that the responsibility for all reproductive decisions remains in the hands of the parents themselves. If the technology is going to force *someone* to play God, then it is imperative that parents get the role. The state's role should be to create an environment in which parents can make these choices without pressure, and to provide education and counselling to help parents make enlightened decisions about how to use the information they obtain about their unborn children. "Although there would be widespread public discussion of values and of the social consequences of individual decisions," Kitcher writes, "there would be no societally imposed restrictions on reproductive choices—citizens would be educated but not coerced." We will also need laws protecting genetic privacy and banning genetic discrimination. Finally, because the cost of genetic technology may make it prohibitive for the poor, we have to hope that people who are born with "good" DNA will feel socially responsible for people who are not.

Kitcher is particularly thoughtful on the subtler social costs of embracing genetic determinism—the philosophy, which is not unlike some of the harsher aspects of the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, that it's all in the genes. It is important to try to keep genes confined to a strictly medical context, and not let them become the justification for inequities in the world at large. Eugenics also encourages the dangerous fantasy that if you do your DNA programming right your kids' lives have been successfully mapped out before they've even begun.

It may be that our fascination with genes tells us more about our own desire for certainty than about how genes can actually influence our lives. We start by getting all excited about finding the genetic link for cystic fibrosis, and we end up thinking that we can abolish crime by breeding people who don't have the crime gene. "Once genes step onstage in our reflections about life and death," Kitcher writes, "they expand their roles, recommending genetic 'solutions' to problems far removed from those that initially excite our sympathy. Time and again, our predecessors heard the sirens sing that genes are destiny. Can we resist?" ♦

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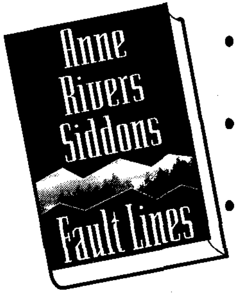

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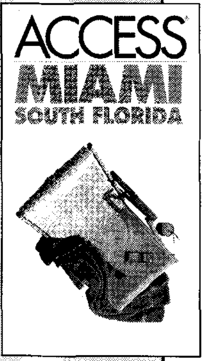

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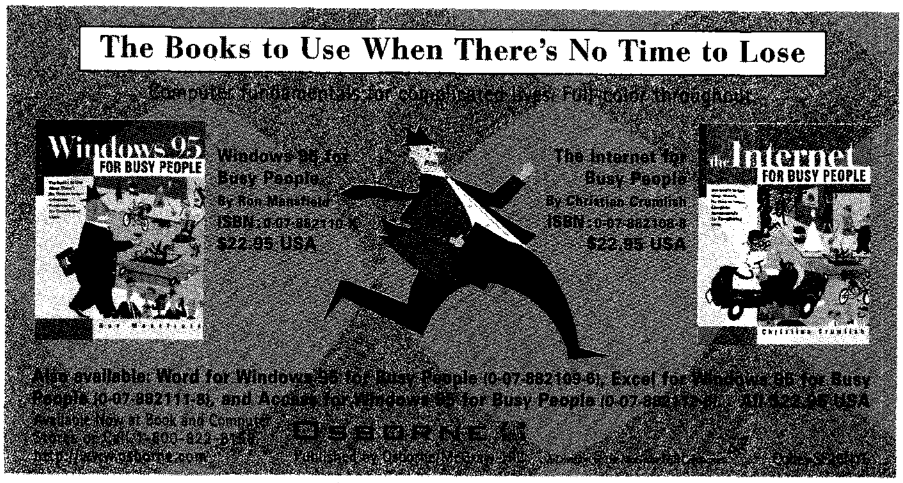
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BRIEFLY NOTED

THE WONDER BOOK OF THE AIR, by Cynthia Shearer (Pantheon; $24). Harrison Durrance—shoeshine boy, West Point graduate, wife-beater, and alcoholic—is the focal point of this compelling first novel, which is narrated by Harrison himself and his wives, children, and associates. Harrison idolizes his uncle Artie, and Artie's homespun homilies—"Remember that the earth curves," "We ain't lost, we is exploring"—echo through the novel, hopeful counterpoints to the tyranny and violence that are Harrison's deepest, most lasting bequest.

THE HIDING ROOM, by Jonathan Wilson (Viking; $23.95). Wilson's novel spans half a century of European history by winding together two alternating narratives. In 1991, when Daniel Weiss takes his mother's body to Jerusalem to be buried, he finally attempts to discover his unknown father's identity. The second narrative opens fifty years earlier, when a young British intelligence officer in Cairo, ambivalent about his tepid life of protocol, falls for a fierce and mysterious Jewish refugee. Wilson's art lies not only in each story's suspenseful telling but in the way the stories circumvent each other and ultimately collide—at a place where identity hovers just beyond the facts that should determine it.

ALFRED STIEGLITZ, by Richard Whelan (Little, Brown; $29.95). Photographer, propagandist for photography as art, and impresario of modern art in America, Stieglitz was nothing but intense: his loves and hatreds were absolute. So was his dedication to aesthetics, and the men and women whose work he promoted and showed in a succession of nonprofit galleries are a *Who's Who* of fine art. Whelan is especially subtle and sensitive in his account of Stieglitz's marriage to the painter Georgia O'Keeffe, a bumpy union of dissimilar people who were essential to each other.

VIEW WITH A GRAIN OF SAND: SELECTED POEMS, by Wislawa Szymborska; translated from the Polish by Stanislaw Barańczak and Clare Cavanagh (Harcourt Brace; $20). These skillful new translations should widen the American audience for a Polish poet who is a modern European master and the rightful peer of Czesław Milosz and Zbigniew Herbert. Szymborska's touch is lighter, however: she captures the nightmarish contingency of human survival, and the human callousness toward nature, with an ironic elegance miraculously free of bitterness.

THE WAY WE ARE, by Margaret Visser (Faber & Faber; $23.95). In this collection of brief, brisk essays the author works her usual magic on ordinary objects and customs and their origins. Santa Claus is "obviously phallic: dressed in red, coming down the chimney, and leaving a present in the stocking." The word "restaurant" invokes the sense of food as a restorative. Achieving thinness is seen as a modern rite of passage requiring "endless efforts at renewal; in the end, traditional, once-in-a-lifetime ritual tattoos and scarification were probably kinder."

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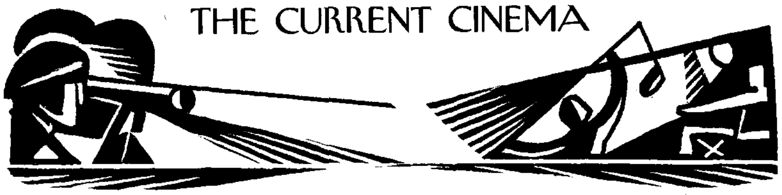
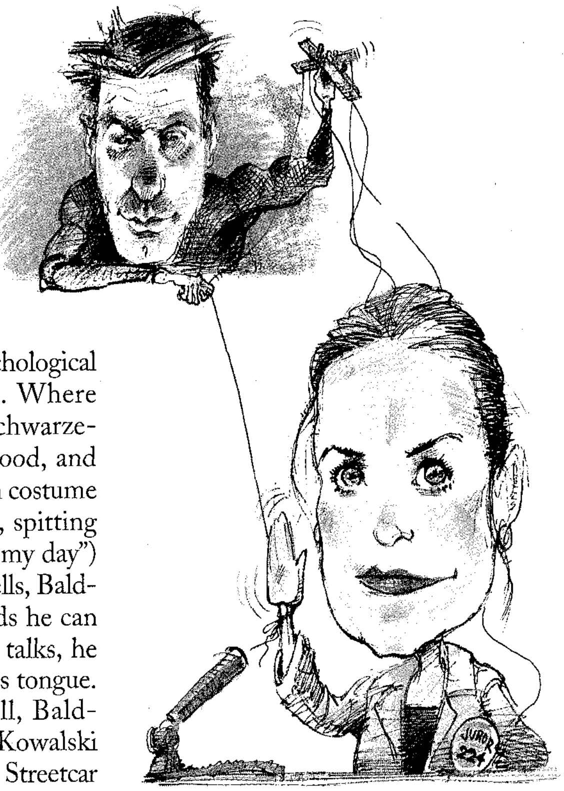


NICE GUYS FINISH LAST

Brian Gibson's "The Juror" and Kenneth Branagh's "A Midwinter's Tale."

BY JAMES WOLCOTT

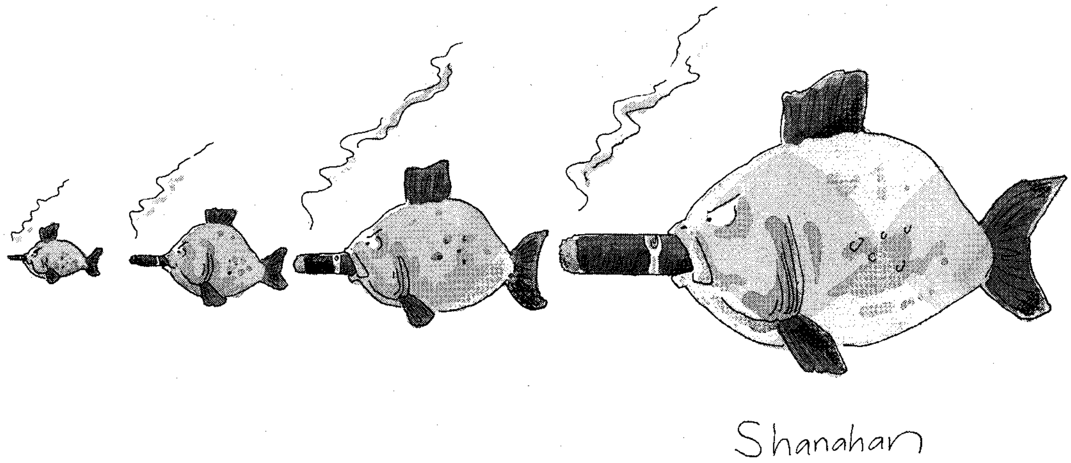
When Alec Baldwin tries to play action heroes, as in "The Shadow" and the useless remake of "The Getaway" (where he was paired with his wife, Kim Basinger), he thuds across the screen with thick determination, as if his veins had been injected with foam rubber. He performs vital tasks like changing lanes in hot pursuit and reloading his weapon as if they were chores on his to-do list. Casting Baldwin as an action figure fizzles because his true knack isn't striking manly-torso poses on a big cinematic stage but waging psychological warfare in intimate confines. Where walking movie posters like Schwarzenegger, Stallone, Clint Eastwood, and whoever is wearing the Batman costume favor a tight-puckered mouth, spitting out their catchphrases ("Make my day") like bullet casings or peanut shells, Baldwin enjoys having lots of words he can orchestrate and deploy. As he talks, he seems to test their effects on his tongue. Too cagey to be a raging bull, Baldwin failed to click as Stanley Kowalski in the recent TV version of "A Streetcar Named Desire," opposite Jessica Lange; his brand of machismo is more brainy than brutal, more masturbatory than rapine. He emphasizes the self-love in his handsome devils until it turns into self-lechery. He's been hilarious in his guest-host spots on "Saturday Night Live," where his parodies of Brando and De Niro offer a *Mad*-magazine course in method acting. And he has briefly detonated in scenes of rhetorical bombast, such as his "brass balls" speech to the salesmen in "Glengarry Glen Ross" and his testimony in "Malice" on why he, as a doctor, stands above all others: "You ask me if I have a God complex? Let me tell you something: I *am* God." But not since "Miami Blues" has Baldwin sustained one of these coups onscreen. Now he does it again, in "The Juror," a movie that sounds like yet another John Grisham adaptation but isn't. (It's actually based on the novel by George Dawes Green.) Thanks to Baldwin, who's sensational, this thing actually has some warped personality.



Justice with strings attached: Alec Baldwin as a brainy villain, and Demi Moore as "The Juror."

DAVID SMALL

Written by Ted Tally and directed by Brian Gibson ("What's Love Got to Do with It"), "The Juror" is photographed in distressed, denatured colors that make every interior seem to dim in the lowering of an eyelid. No matter how dark the screen gets, the darkest image belongs to



Baldwin. He first appears in silhouette, moving with the dancerly steps of a cat burglar. When he's on the telephone, he looms in closeup with half of his face eclipsed in shadow, his left eye doing all the glaring. (When he says about a woman, "I got my eye on her," it's an implicit threat.) Baldwin's character is so spooky and enigmatic he doesn't even have a real name. He's known simply as the Teacher, because, as one character explains, "when you see 'im, school's out." The Teacher has been hired to tamper with the jury in a double-homicide case brought against a John Gotti-style godfather named Boffano (Tony Lo Bianco), whose territory includes the small upstate New York town where the trial is taking place.

The Teacher's target on the jury is Annie Laird (Demi Moore), a single mother who does interactive art installations. He bugs her house, scouts her friends, buys her art, then romances her, oozing sincerity—and can he ever ooze. It's all part of his trap to blackmail her into voting not guilty and swaying the rest of the jury. The Teacher is a professional loner who prides himself on maintaining a higher tone than the no-neck goons in the Boffano clan. (He winces when Boffano's overfed son calls him "a sick fuck" with no friends.) He discusses the Tao with Annie, is conversant with modern art, carves his own puppets, yet is capable of outbursts that end with blood spattered all over the dashboard. Almost touching in his solitude, the Teacher is that rare figure in the underworld: a Zen-artist Nietzschean-superman pedagogic psycho killer. Not since Chaplin's "Monsieur Verdoux" has murder harbored such an amateur philosopher. (And Baldwin's Teacher is more entertaining—he doesn't lecture us.)

As the woman at the receiving end of the Teacher's seductive voodoo, Demi Moore holds her own, and then some. From her earliest performances—as the teenybopper in "Blame It on Rio" and as Rob Lowe's girlfriend in "About Last Night"—Moore's specialty has been registering betrayal, turning her slapped face back on her abuser. Her hard surface has often served to contain her characters' simmering hedonism. Before Moore became a star, releasing perfect teardrops in "Ghost," her signature trait was her sandpapery voice—a husky, inviting rasp redolent of sex and cigarettes, and shouting to be heard above the band. She was the Lauren Bacall of the "Bright Lights, Big City" generation, with something of Bacall's tough-broad manner. The more successful Moore has become, the louder the resentment she has engendered. It's difficult to think of a female movie star more avidly disliked. The antagonism toward her is a little much: it smacks of orthodoxy. The dunking that Moore received for her Hester in "The Scarlet Letter" may have been deserved, but she was effectively butch-femme in "Disclosure," using her indestructible body as an armored carrier of corporate ambition; and in "The Juror" she's equally convincing as a low-maintenance mom who's nesting comfily in a big wooden birdcage of a house. Annie's best friend is Juliet (the sylphy Anne Heche), a doctor who parties as hard as she works. Heche seems to hang-glide through each scene, addressing Annie in a barbiturated voice that taps out each word with a fuzzy hammer. Yet she's smart and capable. She projects such a sympathetic vibe that when she informs Annie she's met this new man who travels a lot, we think, Uh-oh . . . She has become the character we most want no harm to befall.

Although "The Juror" has a high death toll—more than one supporting player is sacrificed to validate the Teacher's bad-guy credentials—the movie lacks that melodramatic spike of dementia (the boiled rabbit) that made "Fatal Attraction" such a smash. And, although the Teacher falls for Annie, the film offers none of the doomed ardor of last year's unjustly neglected "Bulletproof Heart," in which Anthony LaPaglia played a hit man unable to terminate Mimi Rogers. Instead, it sticks to its suspense mechanisms. As in so many movies these days, the suspense is over-protracted; the climactic sequence, set in Guatemala, seems like a mad afterthought. No, the movie is Alec Baldwin's ballgame—his black comedy. He's like Jerry Lewis's Buddy Love from "The Nutty Professor" resurrected as the dark angel of death, an oily operator who fancies himself cruelly suave. Near the end of the film, after the Teacher has stalked, threatened, and terrorized Annie, forcing her to cry "The Teacher will protect me! The Teacher will protect me!" as he threatens to run her son off the side of the road, he tries to soothe her and put their relationship into perspective by musing, "Everything we've been through's like a marriage." That's his idea of bonding.

"A MIDWINTER'S TALE" finds the tireless and brash Kenneth Branagh, who wrote and directed it, working out of a defensive crouch. In 1989, at the age of twenty-eight, the Anglo-Irish actor wrote, directed, and starred in "Henry V," and was crowned the heir to Orson Welles and Laurence Olivier. (That same year, he published an autobiography, entitled "Beginning," a nod to posterity which some found rather pushy.) Branagh and his wife, Her Serene Highness Emma Thompson (who always sounds as if she were serving her vowels with tongs), appeared to have the makings of a quality franchise. Along with their Shakespearean collaborations, which included "Much Ado About Nothing," they were teamed to sharp advantage in the thriller "Dead Again" and, less successfully, in "The Big Chill"-ish comedy "Peter's Friends." Their high-spirited industry irked the British press, which tries to level anyone who lets his ambition show. Because they seemed such a royal duo, Branagh and Thompson became the Charles and Diana of luvvies—"luvvies" being a derisive term popularized by *Private Eye* to refer to actors who laud each other as precious dears keeping up a noble, tattered tradition.

Then the gods frowned. In 1994, Branagh directed and played the title role in a Frankenstein picture starring Robert De Niro as the spare-parts monster with diction problems. It was a frantic, incoherent, pointless mess. The movie may have been titled "Mary Shelley's Frankenstein," but it was perceived as Kenneth Branagh's ego run amok. His marriage to Emma Thompson later ended, and he has been romantically linked to Helena Bonham Carter.

"A Midwinter's Tale" seems to reflect the groggy hangover of these events. (In England, the film was entitled "In the Bleak Midwinter.") Where his "Frankenstein" was big, costly, and loaded with fireworks, "A Midwinter's Tale" is a small, church-mouse production, shot in black-and-white, as if color would be too tarty. The story of a theatrical troupe trying to mount a production of "Hamlet" in a provincial village over the Christmas holidays, "A Midwinter's Tale" represents Branagh's tactical retreat from Hollywood commercialism and a return to his roots in the theatre. It also anticipates his next film project—a full-length version of "Hamlet."

Perhaps because he feared that the movie would be scrutinized as too autobiographical, Branagh cast another actor as the actor-director debating whether to fly to Hollywood and become a star or do "Hamlet" and nurture his soul. The role of Joe Harper is played by Michael Maloney, who resembles Ralph Fiennes without the bitten lip signifying inner anguish; he spends most of his time (and ours) cajoling his cast, trying to hide his desperation when they intone their lines as if marooned in outer space. The characterizations of the "Hamlet" cast aren't fresh—there's an ingénue, a bitter has-been, an alcoholic never-was, a campy queen, and a pretentious trendy (" 'Hamlet' is Bosnia," he pronounces)—but the actors playing these luvvies do their best to take out the creaks. Richard Briers plays the has-been who resists the director's hectic pace and won't be hurried; his late-night chats with Terry du Bois (John Sessions), the queen who's playing Gertrude in drag, have a gentle, eased-into camaraderie. Julia Sawalha—Saffron on "Absolutely Fabulous" and Lydia in the recent BBC "Pride and Prejudice" (she was the one who collapsed in a chair at a party and declared, "I can scarce draw breath, I'm so fat")—signifies idealism as Nina, the ingénue doing Ophelia. Her self-propulsion earns the biggest laugh in the film as she hurtles off the stage and lands splat on the stairs. When Nina and the actor-director become an item, we can't help thinking of Branagh's association with Bonham Carter. Both actresses possess thick, curly brown hair and represent a new beginning.

It may be gossipy and gauche to draw such correspondences between art and life, but "A Midwinter's Tale" leaves us no other option, since it's about the messy overlap between the two. It also doesn't give us much else to occupy our minds. All that this antic movie asks of us is our fond indulgence. (It's a luv-in.) As "Hamlet" approaches opening night, the movie alternates between slapstick mishaps and sobby outbursts. Everyone is jumpy with jitters, and the director doubles as morale booster and drill instructor. Like "Stripes" or "The Mighty Ducks," "A Midwinter's Tale" becomes a story about a motley squad of losers mastering the basics, learning to coöperate, and emerging as winners. Big whup. The production they stage of "Hamlet" blitzes past the text to present a machine-gun opening, sword fights in the aisles, loud declamations, and clouds of hokey atmosphere, which are cheered by the audience as if it were a Saturday matinée at the Bijou. The film positions Shakespeare as an alternative to show biz, then reduces Shakespeare to show biz. "A Midwinter's Tale" isn't as far from Hollywood as it thinks. ♦

SILVER LINING DEPARTMENT

[*From the Pensacola News Journal*]

A story in Wednesday's News Journal about beach businesses returning to normal did not clearly state that the freezer at Peg Leg Pete's filled with maggots was not in use.

The old freezer was being used as a Dumpster behind the building.

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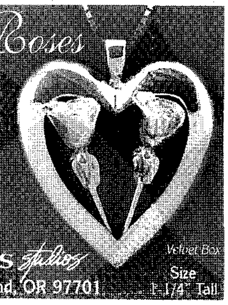

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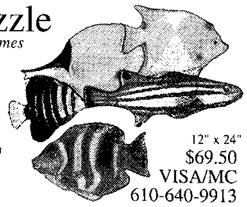

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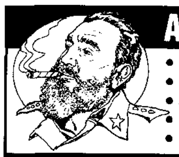

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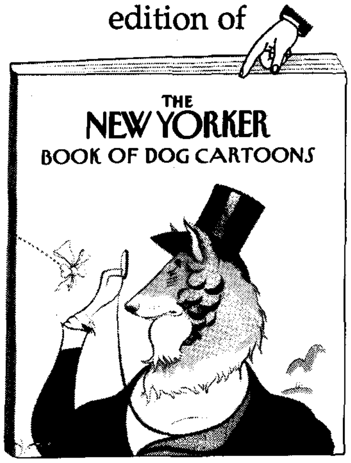

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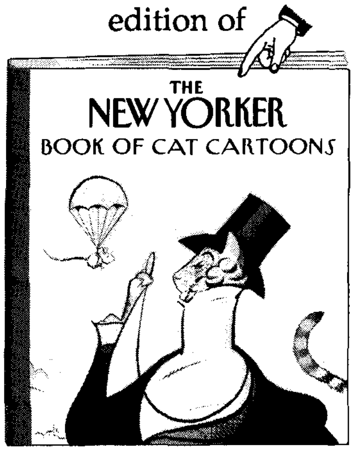

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MUSICAL EVENTS

THE DEADLY SAINTS

Robert Wilson’s revival of “Four Saints in Three Acts” in Houston.

BY PAUL GRIFFITHS

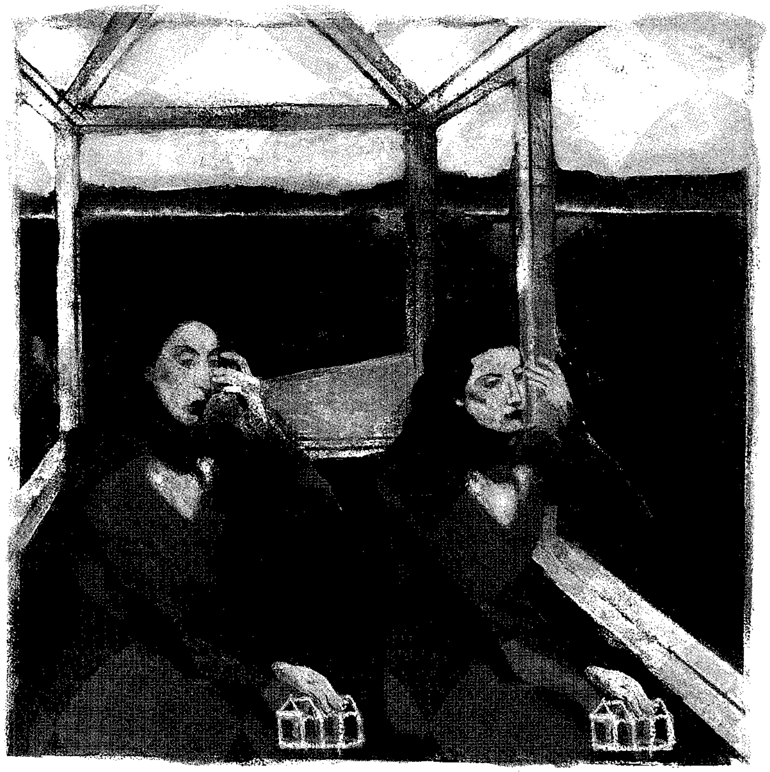
WELL, we had to know, and know for sure, and now we know, and know for sure, and no, no, no, no, please don’t make me listen to any more Gertrude Stein. The piece on which she collaborated with Virgil Thomson, “Four Saints in Three Acts,” is a darling of history books (which relish oddity) but not of the living stage (which is a bit more circumspect). Without having experienced the thing in the theatre, we could remember “Four Saints” as a bold experiment in sung glossolalia and a whole lot of fun: the re-creation, by two Americans in Paris, of Dada as Broadway musical. And, indeed, the opera had a six-week run on Broadway when it was first produced, in 1934.

This time around, more soberly and more appropriately, it will have just four performances, at Lincoln Center during next summer’s festival there, and surely it would not have enjoyed even this belated notice—the first full, professional staging since 1952—if it had not attracted the attention and respect of Robert Wilson. This is his show. Of course it is. That it should arrive in Thomson’s centenary year is a modestly happy accident; that it coincides, too, with a Stein revival is inevitable, since Stein’s writings are forever in the process of recovery, as new generations of readers decide, briefly, that so much nothing really must amount to something. Mr. Wilson himself, in the program for the Houston Grand Opera’s unveiling of his production, writes of having felt “a creative dialogue” with Stein, “especially with her notion of seeing a play as a landscape,” and he’s worked with Stein’s words before. That doesn’t mean he needs them, and it certainly doesn’t mean he needs Thomson’s music. In his theatre—where words, music, movement, and lighting proceed as parallels instead of meeting in conjunctions—the choice of play, or opera, is a choice of what tension will be achieved between the time scale of the action and that of the words or music. What’s special about “Four Saints” is that it fails to put up any kind of fight, to offer any sort of contrary sway. A grand unfolding on Mr. Wilson’s part, through an unbroken span of an hour and a half, is accompanied by bright jabberings, as if people at a cocktail party were going on with their small talk (tiny, tiny talk, as Stein and Thomson make it), not noticing that unseen hands were guiding them through some ceremonial of solemnity and clowning.

One of the feeble jokes of “Four Saints in Three Acts” is that every word of the title is misleading, with the possible exception of “in.” There are four acts, plus a prologue, and nineteen saints adorn the cast list, with more named in the text. Also, the “saints” are only dubiously such, since they include non-calendrical items—St. Plan, St. Settlement, St. Answers—and since, where the characters do have the names of real saints, they seem to have forgotten everything of those people’s lives and passions. (If there’s any point to the opera at all, it’s perhaps to suggest an end-of-the-universe stasis, when all the differences—as vital to opera as to religion—are dead.) As for the piece being in “acts,” that term seems misplaced when nothing happens in Stein’s text but the unstoppable self-generation of words. For the first production, a scenario was applied to the libretto by Maurice Grosser, Thomson’s long-term companion, and a few elements of this are retained in Mr. Wilson’s version.

What’s gone is the high camp. The 1934 “Four Saints,” commemorated at Houston in a display of photographs, was evidently a rare entertainment, with an entirely black cast of singers and dancers, dressed mostly in full Catholic vestments or else in very little at all, disporting themselves in front of sets made of cellophane and beads. This must have compensated for the lack of music, as much as Mr. Wilson’s rather different sort of gorgeousness now does. But surely it's the lack of music that caused the long eclipse meanwhile.

Thomson's score, to the extent that it rises to any kind of style at all, is an irritatingly cheerful mixture of Parisian urbanity and Missouri nostalgia. One hears in the simple chords and slight indications of melody (so slight that a three-note scale has to serve as a murderously dominant theme) what I suppose must be his appreciation of Satie—though it's hard to be sure, when what in Satie is pure white is in Thomson merely colorless. One hears, too, strains of Americana—hymns, marches, a square-dance accordion—almost neutralized by narrowness of imagination, and perhaps also of technique. There are abrupt intrusions, including a brief tango and a full-scale rendition (for no very good reason, of course, because we are far, far from the world of very good reasons) of "My country, 'tis of thee." These, however, only slightly disturb the banality.



Two St. Theresas: Suzanna Guzman and Ashley Putnam.

RICCARDO VECCHIO

Possibly, we should recognize in the score the work of the critic Thomson subsequently became. Resident in Paris before and during the composition of "Four Saints," he felt himself in the musical thick of things: this was the city not only of Satie but also of Stravinsky, Ravel, Poulenc, and Milhaud. "Four Saints" is his yell of admiration and fellow-feeling, and, like most immediate criticism, it's of shallow reach and momentary importance. It's a little bark, streaming with pennants, launched on seas with much deeper currents than it can hope to touch or control.

If Thomson's response to the composers around him was limited, so was his reaction to Stein's libretto, whose unruliness he seems to have had a hand in mitigating even at the textual stage. According to Anthony Tommasini, whose biography of Thomson is due out this year, the composer was responsible for distributing the given lines among the characters, for adding a Compère and a Commère to enlighten us somewhat about the proceedings (as in the Stravinsky-Cocteau "Oedipus Rex"), and for having a leading character, St. Theresa, represented by two people onstage (as in the Brecht-Weill "Seven Deadly Sins"). The musical setting takes further steps in shifting Stein's voice from the gnomic to the silly. Long, flowing utterances are clipped into short phrases with pat cadences. Everything—whether repeated cliché or startlement ("Begin suddenly not with sisters")—is reduced to the same ordinariness. The big problem with "Four Saints" is not that it's crazy but that it's not crazy enough, for only very occasionally does Thomson allow Stein's text to establish its abnormality as normal: one such moment is St. Ignatius's aria "Once in a while and where and where around around is as sound and around is a sound" (though perhaps I'm being influenced in this judgment by Sanford Sylvan's marvellous vocal demeanor throughout the opera as someone dazed but beautiful); another is the long litany on the four words that open that aria.

Once in a while, we need to see "Four Saints"—provided the while is long enough. Dennis Russell Davies, who conducts this production, keeps the wheels moving, which is as much as one can expect; and there are some excellent singers. Sometimes they're too excellent for what they have to sing. Two young members of the Houston Opera Studio, the soprano Nicole Heaston and the tenor John McVeigh, seem to be wanting to leap out of the constrictions of their roles as SS. Settlement and Stephen; they're both strong, engaging artists. Ashley Putnam, as St. Theresa I, goes more for stateliness, though not with as much security as Mr. Sylvan. Wilbur Pauley makes us enjoy the sombre idiocy of the Compère; Gran Wilson has lunges of great bravado as St. Chavez.

You go, though, for the spectacle. Over "Four Saints" Mr. Wilson spreads all his characteristic modes of deceleration, reiteration, and mad glee. Mr. Pauley is the chief conveyor of this last quality: with his tall figure dressed in a costume that's half tuxedo, half gorilla suit, he has the expressionist stalk that was a prominent feature of Mr. Wilson's "Black Rider." The others have to shuffle, glide, or drift about the stage, and so visible legs would be an impediment; Francesco Clemente, whose costume designs seem to have little reference to his paintings, gives them all long robes or skirts. The many minor saints, effectively a chorus, have stiff, cream-colored gowns of a turn-of-the-century cut recurrent in Mr. Wilson's work, enabling them in this case to look both formal and playful in their rotations and groupings. St. Ignatius's robe is covered with bees, St. Chavez's with arrows and eyes; the two St. Theresas are in vivid peacock blue, in contrast with the off-whites, golds, and earth colors of the rest.

Besides providing a superior mannequin parade, the production offers magic and humor. One of Mr. Wilson's great gifts is in the choice of those he works with, and Jennifer Tipton's lighting is excellently used to realize his dreamscapes: of glowing purple sheep on a glowing purple ground, for instance, or of moons or windows projected on a huge rear screen, or of flooded, merging color on that same screen, subject to instant change as someone bangs a staff on the ground during the intermezzo. All this is wonderful; so is the final image of a conflagration in the palace of Heaven. Your penalty is the opera. ♦

SHOUTS & MURMURS

KILLER BAGELS

BY CALVIN TRILLIN

I was surprised to read that bagels have become the most dangerous food in the country. I've lived in New York—which is to bagels what Paris is to croissants—for a number of years, and I've never been injured by a bagel. When I go back to Kansas City, where I grew up, old friends never say, "Isn't it scary living in New York, what with the bagels and all?" My answer to that question would be that New Yorkers who were asked to name foods they think of as particularly benign would mention bagels as often as chicken soup.

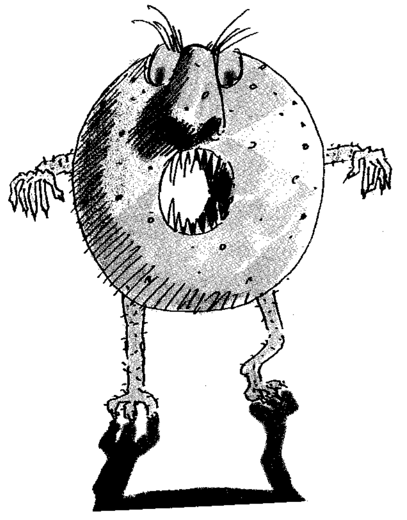
They might talk about that morning in the park when nothing seemed to soothe their crying baby until a grandmotherly woman sitting on a nearby bench, nattering with another senior citizen about Social Security payments or angel-food-cake recipes or Trotskyism, said that the only thing for a teething infant was a day-old bagel. They might talk about the joy of returning to New York from a long sojourn in a place that was completely without bagels—Bangladesh, or a tiny town in Montana, or some other outpost in the vast patches of the world that New Yorkers tend to think of as the Bagel Barrens. They might talk about the days when people used to sit on their stoops and watch the neighborhood kids play roller-skate hockey in the street with a stale bagel as the puck—days spent listening contentedly to the comforting slap of hockey stick against bagel and the inevitable cries, when the action got too close to a drain opening, "Lost bagel! Lost bagel!" They might talk about picking up freshly baked bagels late at night and being reassured, as they felt the warmth coming through the brown paper bag, that they would be at peace with the world the next morning, at least through breakfast.

According to a piece in the *Times* not long ago about how dangerous kitchens have become, that brown paper bag could have been holding a time bomb. "We're seeing an increasing number of bagel-related injuries in the emergency service," Dr. Stephen Adams, associate medical director of the emergency department at Northwestern Memorial Hospital, in Chicago, told the author of the piece, Suzanne Hamlin. It isn't that bagels are considered dangerous to eat in the way that triple bacon cheeseburgers are considered dangerous to eat. It's true that in recent years some bakers in New York have been making bagels with some pretty weird ingredients—oat bran, say, and cinnamon, and more air than you'd find in the Speaker of the House—but not dangerously weird. Nor is there any implication that bagels are dangerous because they are easily flung at people in the close quarters of an apartment kitchen.

The danger comes with people trying to get at bagels. "The hand lacerations, cuts, gouges and severed digits," it says in the *Times*, "are caused by impatient eaters who try to pry apart frozen bagels with screwdrivers, attempt to cut hard bagels with dull knives and, more than likely, use their palms as cutting boards."

Ms. Hamlin found no increase in New York bagel injuries. Reading about the havoc that bagels can wreak in Illinois or California, a New Yorker might say, in the superior tone customarily used by someone from Minneapolis describing the chaos caused in Birmingham by a simple snowstorm, "People there just don't know how to handle such things"—or, as the director of emergency medicine at Bellevue said to the *Times*, "Those people just aren't ethnically equipped." The Bagel Barrens have been shrinking rapidly—bagel stores have sprouted in the shopping malls of neighborhoods that baked-goods sociologists have long identified with white bread—so maybe it's true that a lot of Americans are being given access to bagels before they know how to handle them, in the way that a lot of Americans are said to have access to 9-mm. pistols or semiautomatic rifles before they know how to handle them.

But there is a more positive way to look at this. Twenty years ago, the bagels in Kansas City were accurately described by one of my daughters as tasting like "round bread." It was impossible to conceive of anybody desperately going to work with a screwdriver to free up one of them for thawing. Could it be that outlander bagels have improved to the point of being something that people truly yearn for? If so, maybe what we're seeing in Midwestern emergency rooms is the price of progress. ♦



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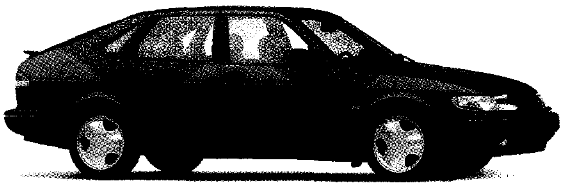

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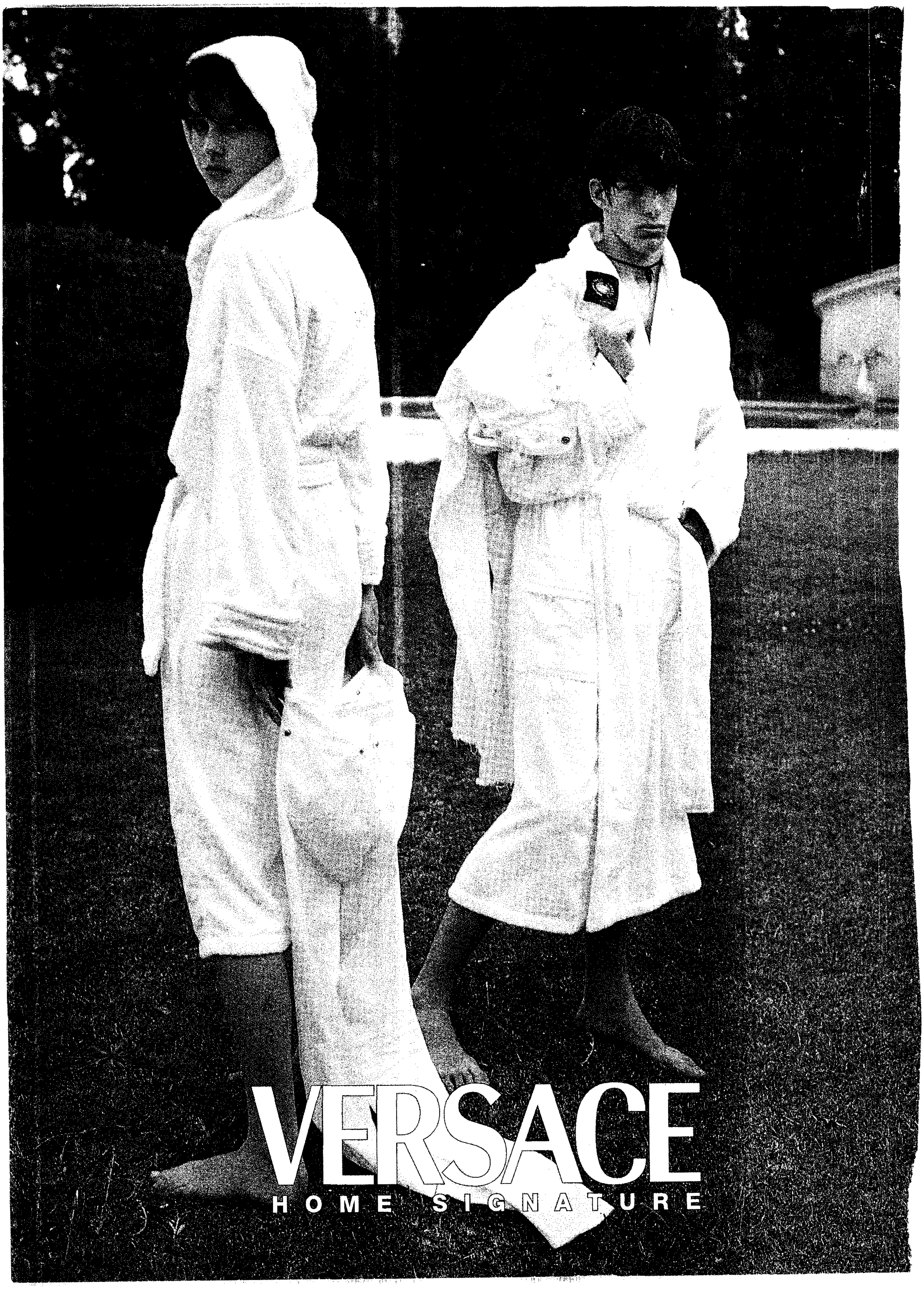
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